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Spel of Good and Evil.

tions. Faith dies: and
for religious rebibal.



"I CREATED LIGHT AND DARKNESS; AND I CREATE GOOD AND EVIL, SAITH THE
LORD." — Isaiah, abridged, xlv. 7-11.



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P R E F A C E.

THE Gospels of Christianity expressly state that they are not a final revelation. Many things were left for future revelation when the world should be ready to receive them.

“The Gospel of Good and Evil” reveals the mystery of evil in the world; for this age is ready to receive it. The Mosaic revelation taught that revengeful retribution is the law of God as between man and his fellow. The Christian revelation teaches an opposite doctrine. From this conflict we are led to deduce the law of all revelations. No revelation is final and unchangeable; but new increments of divine instruction are and ever will be given as the increased enlightenment of mankind prepares us for their acceptance.

In our Gospels, as well as in the Bible of the Hebrews, no satisfying revelation is made of the reason why evil exists in the world, what its nature is, and its purpose in the economy of Providence. This seems to be one of the things which the founder of our religion included among those which his disciples were not ready to receive. We are inspired with the admonition that the time has come when mankind requires a better insight into the mystery of evil.

The moral world has entered upon a career of accelerated movement that generates increase of moral evil by increased collision. We require additional means for repression of these added evils; and a better knowledge of the nature of evil will tend to practical suggestions.

Religion, when active, is a great represser of evil; and its power for good is proportioned to the faith and zeal that stimulate it.

It is a sad calamity when belief in ecclesiastic dogmas falls

away, and people grow indifferent to religion; when the Church will make no concessions to win them back, and they are driven to seek new doctrine from new inspiration. The fact is patent to all men, and it is proclaimed from every pulpit, that some of the great dogmas are but inferences deduced from isolated texts of Scripture by primitive councils of an inferior age; that they are not plainly taught by our Gospels; that they no longer command intelligent faith; and that this unbelief makes defection from religion.

“The Gospel of Good and Evil” points out the doctrines that form the stumbling-block to intelligent consciences and to the progress of religion. It shows that they are exactly such dogmas as are not essential to enforce Christian morality, virtue, or charity, nor to support the divine mission of our Saviour. It shows reasonable ground for supposing, that, if they were referred back to Scripture by a new council of this more enlightened age, they might honestly be changed by new interpretations that would be more acceptable; and that this is the only way to save our existing institutions from changes more radical and destructive. By timely concessions, the religious revolution of Luther might have been stayed; and the same spirit of concession is now invoked, that the coming reformation may not be revolutionary. It teaches that whatever concessions may be demanded for the restoration of general belief it is the interest of the Church to initiate, that the causes of honest infidelity be removed, that interest in religion be awakened by new formularies of doctrine, and that a new growth be given to earnest faith and Christian unity. In the providence of God, there is but one way to supplant a rooted error, viz., by substituting a new truth of more popular acceptance. This is what is proposed.

INTRODUCTION.

“THE Gospel of Good and Evil” consists of a hundred and thirty-two short essays designed to illustrate the nature and uses of the various evils, each treated separately. In this it differs from other treatises on that subject.

The conclusions deduced are, that good and evil are convertible terms, and that each is necessary to the existence of the other.

There is no necessary connection between the essays, and no regard is paid to order of sequence. The book can be opened at any of its brief chapters, at moments of leisure; and it may be read from any starting-point without detriment to any connection with what precedes or follows. Occasionally the same idea appears reiterated in different chapters.

Physical evils are first examined.

Moral evils follow. They will be found to be governed by one and the same law, and to be subservient to similar necessity; so that no clear line of separation can be drawn between them.

The question is, How can we reconcile evil with the attributes of omnipotent wisdom and goodness? Could not the same purposes have been effected without evil?

If evil be offensive to Deity, why does he permit its existence? and, after death, what good purpose is served by investing evil with immortality, and perpetuating what is to be forever offending him?

This is what we have to investigate.

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PART FIRST.



PHYSICAL EVIL.

THE GOSPEL OF GOOD AND EVIL.

PHYSICAL EVIL DEFINED.

WE say the Creator is all good, and therefore his works are only good.

But the world is his work, and we complain that it is full of evil. How this is, and why, is what it is our task to explain.

In general terms, we speak of the beauties of creation and the perfection of its laws; but, when we analyze, we find that evil forms a large part of the component atoms of all things. The world has light; but it has also darkness. The elements are disorderly and destructive. The weather is ever in extremes. It is too hot, too cold, too windy, too dry, or too wet. We ask for rain to help us, and, instead, a flood comes, and brings us ruin.

We snatch our food from a host of enemies, — from blight, frost, storm, weeds, vermin, and putrefaction.

The mass of life is sustained by the active agency of death. It is by violence and murder that all fish live; and so do birds, insects, and animals, and even man himself. Man enters the world crying, every day frets him, and his parting is in agony.

These are examples of physical evils.

ELEMENTARY EVIL.

“ Father,
Enrich me with a knowledge of thy works ;
Through the disclosing deep, light my blind way.”

Taking the universe as we find it, we see it is composed of innumerable central suns around which planets course. We discover that there are contending forces : one turns each planet and the sun itself on its axis ; another vast power drives the planets in orbits around the sun ; another force keeps them from straying beyond their orbits ; and yet another holds them off so that they keep their distance from the sun. There is, besides, an internal force of cohesion that holds firmly together the atoms composing the celestial bodies. There are other forces innumerable. Each and every one has certain antagonism to all the others. Thus we see that all Nature is a system of violence, one thing driving another ; and it is by the equipoise of checks and balances that order is maintained and perpetually insured. There is no life without contention, no day without night. If we want sunlight to-morrow, we must pass through darkness to-night to get to it. From this we derive the first hint, that we must go through evil to enjoy good ; that evil is a contending force necessary to give to goodness life and motion, if not generation.

We cannot imagine any plan better than the planetary system for the purposes designed. We deem impossible any arrangement under that system that would give

light without darkness; and investigation may show, that, in the revolutions of the moral world, causes entirely analogous make it equally impossible to give good without evil.

STORMS AND FLOODS.

“Bleak and dismal on the leaf-stripped woods
The fitful rains rush down in sudden floods.”

The alternating periods of day and night, the snow at the poles of the earth and on its great mountain-chains, and the fervid heat at the broad central belt of the tropics, are arrangements expressly designed to keep up continual disturbance in the air and the great waters. Heat and cold give and take alternately.

The ocean teems with life. The air is an ocean of gas, at the bottom of which man and his co-tenants of the land have their range. Exhalations from plants and animals, from matter in decay, from decomposing rocks, and from all the pores of the earth, would smother life, were it not for this provision of disturbance to keep the air in constant agitation. Life in the ocean dwells near its surface; and its saline waters go soon to corruption if taken out in a pail, and kept at rest. The untiring wave is a beautiful contrivance for its healthy agitation. Electricity is a subtle element of life that needs also to be disturbed. It has its currents. Could not these changes and agitations have been produced in a quiet way to save us from the evil of storms and inundations?

Over the largest area of the earth, all the sunshine is necessary to ripen vegetation, after deducting the days of cloud and rainfall. It would not answer, therefore, to have the rain-supply returned to the clouds, obstructing the sunshine as it does when it falls. The supply is therefore sent up by invisible evaporation, which is necessarily a much slower process, so as not to bar the sunshine. Electricity accompanies the water.

To provide for the great exhaustion of water in summer-time, and to do it without withdrawing sunshine, so necessary in early spring-time, the month of March gives us large supplies of water in the shortest time. This comes from the change of temperature that length of hours of sunshine brings. The storms and floods of that period are a necessary consequence. They purify the air, and they are evidently a necessary preparation for the great draughts about to be so suddenly made on the life-giving elements thus supplied. Experienced meteorologists know, that, in proportion as the fury of this periodic storm is lessened, the harvest of summer is shortened; thus exemplifying its beneficent purpose. In California, the demands of summer-growth have to be supplied with the entire stock of water in the winter months; for in the six months of summer no rain falls. There the summer crops are safely predicted by the rain-gauge. The more disagreeable the winter, and the more destructive the flooded streams, the more abundant surely will be the harvest. Here is a beautiful illustration of the compensation which Providence gives for the evils that are necessarily incident to the construction of this world, and to the laws of life growing out of that construction.

That thunder and lightning, with their incident evils, are necessary attendants when rain falls in summer, seems to be indicated by the fact that in California, where no rain falls in summer, thunder and lightning are unknown. The long rheumatic season of condensed rains completely supplies, at the same time, pure electricity, needing no detergent lightning then, nor thereafter.

It can be demonstrated, that, without the terrible tornadoes and other destructive phenomena peculiar to the torrid zone, the country would be uninhabitable, from the poisonous exhalations that need their purification.

“Nor God alone in the still calm we find :
He mounts the storm, and rides upon the wind.”

The people of San Francisco (and the coast countries of all continents) complain of the strong and persistent ocean-gales of summer, with their blinding dust. They ask if, in reason, these might not be of some moderation. But to grant their prayer would be to suffocate the continent behind them ; for no less initial force would suffice to carry the relieving air-current to its salvation. Without such troublous winds, such coast-ranges would be themselves pestiferous.

We chronicle the devastations of floods and other casualties ; but these have narrow bounds. Would we present in equal detail the widespread blessings that flow from them over the great expanse, giving health and wealth to millions, what a balance would appear in favor of good over evil !

BARREN MOUNTAINS.

“How dull were earth, if all one level plain,
Horizon-bound, on north, south, east, and west !
Even though robed in the lush, gorgeous vest
Of tropic lands, her beauty would be vain ;
And we should sigh for barrenness again.
Variety invigorates, and gives zest
To all things, even to those which we love best :
Sunshine needs shadow, pleasure haply pain.”

Barren land is counted among the evils. The geography of the earth reveals what appears to be an excess of unprofitable land, that might better have been fertile. Vast mountain-ranges covered with eternal snow, the Himalayas, the Urals, the Alps, the Nevadas, the Rocky Mountains, the Cordilleras, and the like, besides being useless for culture, are impassable barriers between nations. Yet there is no more admirable arrangement of Providence. Were the earth more level and rich in soil, it would drown in winter, and be desert in summer. As the expanse of ocean is necessary to supply the clouds, the mountains are the great water-reservoirs in our land. When the season of greatest rains would else inundate the plains, destroying life and fertility, their great elevation, that makes them uninhabitable, gives them refrigeration, by which they hold in snowy deposit the surplus rainfall, to be disbursed, in summer-drought, among the streams that refresh the thirsty vales, and to keep full the subterranean reservoirs that give us flowing springs and artesian fountains. The great deserts of Africa teach us to value the blessing of high mountains ; the want of which makes the plains more barren than

the mountains themselves. The elevation of mountains serves another indispensable purpose. They are great mineral depositories. Were they flattened down, the various stratifications of minerals and fossils would so far underlie each other as to be out of reach of discoverers forever. By the upheaval of the mountains, these minerals are turned upon edge to our view. The granite, which was undermost, becomes the topmost crest, where its superior hardness makes it most valuable as a resistant to decomposition from the elements that else would too soon trample down the mountain-heights.

It is the alternations of temperature between the mountains and the plains, that regulate the rains, the air-currents, and the electric equilibrium. With all the excess of bounty given to the plains, Providence so compensates the mountaineer, that he has no envy of his brother's richer inheritance. The purer air of the uplands gives him ruddier health and more elastic spirits. Who of the plains can match the Swiss in attachment to home, in high devotion to freedom and independence? They may have thinner soils; but their superior invigoration, and endurance of toil, compensate for this. If they toil more for subsistence, the keener relish of their mountain-air gives from a scantier board a richer enjoyment.

COMPENSATION.

In the State of California, there is for six months of summer no rain. Excepting a very few rivers, all the streams run dry, and gushing streams depart. Green

fields, verdant hills, and grassy lawns forsake the landscape. No smiling cottages adorn the banks of streams that are dry in summer, and in winter flooded far and wide. The great Nevadas, broad and high, have vast reservoirs of water, and snows eternal against their summer exhaustion. Why, then, cannot we have, as other lands, rippling streams, babbling brooks, and gushing springs? Why thirsts the ground when water might flow over it? So speak the peoples. They know not what they ask. Never was arrangement devised in greater kindness than this withdrawing of the waters from the surface, where solar evaporation would soon exhaust them. Streams there are, and lakes and springs; but, to preserve them for the use of the land, Providence gives them courses below the surface, sheltered from evaporating waste. The soil is arranged with a peculiar capillary porosity that conducts the water upward to the roots of trees and shrubs and many grasses; so that, without a drop of water from above, from April to November the tree keeps green its leaves, and bears unusual fruit-crops to healthy maturity. But the water is everywhere alkaline and ill-flavored. It is so; and it is to this alkaline saturation that California owes the inexhaustible fertility that bears successive crops of wheat for fifteen years, from the same fields, without diminution of the harvest!

This law of compensation is beautifully illustrated in the way cattle are provided with pasture in the long drought of California summers. Herbage ceases to grow in the first days of June: the roots die, and the top parches. The leading pasture is wild oats. Now, every seed, by peculiarity of the climate, is tightly held

in its capsule till the rains of November loosen the fibre, and the seed falls. The unclouded sun so quickly acts on the outer coat of the stem, that the inner portion is cured, with all its nutriment preserved from atmospheric desiccation; and the crop stands as hay well cured where it grew. Cattle keep fat on it till the rains make grass again. The wild oats of California present us with a curious exemplification of the changes which are provided in plants to meet the exigencies of new conditions. Cultivated oats were first introduced by the missionaries from Mexico. As it became wild, Nature seemed to desire that it should have the widest distribution. Accordingly we find the wild oat supplied with jointed legs, in every respect like those of a grasshopper. When dry, these are folded; but the first rain brings them out. When the returning sun begins to dry the limbs, the contraction of the joints sets them to hopping about in all directions; and they go often two yards from their starting-point, and much farther if wind is astir. They will do the same on a table if you first dip the grain into water a moment. As it dries, it begins to jump around. By this means, the wild oats, so valuable as feed in the long drought, now covers an area much greater than it could have extended without the addition of the power of locomotion. A merciful provision is made in the wild and treeless sage-plains of Nevada for winter-support of cattle. Among the sage-brush is a species of white, broad-leaved artemisia, locally called white sage, or winter-fat. In summer, while bunch-grass and other feed is to be had, this winter-fat has a pungent bitterness that makes it inedible. It is thus preserved from

consumption till the first frost comes to destroy other herbage. Frost gives to the winter-fat new qualities. Immediately the bitter changes to sweet: snow is rare; and, all winter long, the cattle find in it the most nutritious pasture. Without this provision, they would perish.

In these illustrations, we have striking proofs of that great law of compensation to which the universe owes its stability and its eternity.

CONSUMPTION OF MATTER.

“Appetite compels
Daily with fresh materials to repair
The unavoidable expense of life,
The necessary waste of flesh and blood.”

We have shown that all motion (and therefore all life) is produced by collision; one body driving another. All motion requires for its production the expenditure of something to create the force that moves. When you throw a ball, some of the muscle of your arm is consumed, and converted into the power applied. This waste material must be replaced by fresh matter, or the body would soon cease its functions. For this reason, all life must be fed by the destruction of other life having corresponding elements. This is the source of more evil and more suffering than all other causes combined; but it is also the parent of civilization, of industry and commerce, of all art and science, of every thing that gives man superiority and dominion over the earth, and makes the seas his highway. It is the great

propelling power that makes up our busy life ; and by what other means less compulsive can we imagine that the purpose could be effected ? The evils it entails are clearly an unavoidable necessity. But could not man have been exempt from this law ? Not if he is to live on this planet, certainly ; for it is the universal law of life in all organizations on this globe. Every part of his structure is alike with other animals ; and what is a necessity for their bodies must be an equal necessity for his. As they are born, so we ; and the same affection results between parent and offspring : as they live, pursuing the means of life, we also are kept in activity, seeking our daily bread : and as they die, so our bodies wear out, and give place to new forms, under the atomic law that demands constant change of rotation in the primary elements of creation. Their life everlasting depends upon their moving on forever in never-ceasing changes. As no two facts are alike, so it is probable that nothing once formed can thereafter be reproduced without some variations, as a law inherent in matter. When existing forms of life have rung all possible changes, so that no further creation can go on without reproducing features already once created, may it not be that geologic revolutions come to the relief of healthful life by a new creation of new varieties of animals ? Geology reveals such changes oft repeated ; and, as we know that inferior races of men walked the earth ages before Adam, our account of creation may refer to the dawn of our improved Caucasian race. For aught we know, the misty instinct of Egypt may have built up on this truth the idea of a similar resurrection of the body, after our geologic age, in higher spiritual condition.

EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANIC DESTRUCTION.

We are the offspring of the earth ; so is every thing that grows thereon, whether held by roots or by gravitation. As the child gets from its mother a nature which is necessarily alike in both, so the earth is bound up in laws analogous to those it imposes upon its children. It wears, and requires renewal and never-ceasing motion among its particles, else it would not be alive with quickening power. Ask it to expend its force in giving growth to the grain we sow, and it will demand refreshment to repair the waste, like as we do.

Under the same law, the mountains of the globe are ever being broken down, ground up, and washed over the plains. What the ocean is to the clouds the mountains are to the plains. Aided by frost, they charge the rivulets with new soil, and send the streams to spread it as manure over the land below. In time, it is obvious that ever taking away, and never returning, must level down the high places of earth at last. But mountains we must have, as elsewhere explained ; and there must be somewhere a reserved power competent to the upheaval of the solid earth necessary to their formation.

The earthquake tells us that such reservoirs of power are kept ever living, and the volcano informs us that these reservoirs require chimneys to give room and vent to the surplus produce by the continual conversion of solids into more space-requiring fluxes and gases. The process consists in melting up the barren rocks below, and throwing them to the surface, changed into rich

soil. There are more than two hundred known volcanoes unceasingly engaged at this useful work. The slopes of Vesuvius attest the value of volcanic soil. California is largely covered with it; and, everywhere in the mining districts, vast "table-mountains" stand, separated by valleys cut out from one level sheet of molten lava, that once covered the whole State; the table-lands yet retaining their covering, out of which decomposition has formed a surface of the richest soil.

It is in proof that every part of the earth has in turn, however remote, its share in this renovation. No part of the crust of the earth stands firm. It is matter of instrumental observation that every coast on the globe, that has been examined, is either slowly rising or sinking. In time, the whole planet is probably literally turned inside out. This immense power necessary to keep alive the quickening life of our planet is, for the most part, so exercised as to be least harmful to life on the surface. Volcanic chimneys are elevated on high to carry away in safety the noxious gases engendered. It is comparatively seldom, and then doubtless a necessity, that the dread earthquake upheaves a sudden mountain, or ingulfs a city or a plain in the yawning void.

Philosophers who study these phenomena recognize their usefulness, and confess that no power less terrible would be adequate to the task. In no department of Nature is there more striking conviction of the vast preponderance of good over evil.

DARKNESS.

“Darkness, how profound ! All beauty void ;
Distinction lost, and gay variety
One universal blot.”

Light is an inestimable blessing; and the absence of it, darkness, is set down as one of the evils.

From the rotation of the earth on its axis, and from its orbit round a central sun, which gives it light in the most economical manner, one side of this planet must necessarily be immersed in its own shadow : and darkness is unavoidable ; for it is a necessary law of intercepted light. Were it not for this law, — that opaque bodies intercept light, — neither our houses nor our clothes would conceal our bodies ; nor would they afford us shelter from the fierce light and heat of the summer sun. The beauty of the earth, too, would be lost by depriving the landscape of the soft influence of mingled light and shade.

It may appear, at first thought, that unbroken sunshine would be desirable. Hear the experience of a traveler who has tried it. Buchanan, in his “ Expedition to the North Pole,” says that “ the novelty of perpetual day made it at first very attractive ; but very soon it became extremely irksome from its monotony. No man, without having experienced the want of a regulator to mark the periods of labor and repose, and to give to Nature that variety our senses crave, can know how truly thankful we should be for the wise and merciful provision of alternating periods of light and darkness.”

Even in countries where night regularly alternates with the day, but where clouds and rain are little known, as in parts of Egypt and Chili, the monotony of unceasing sunshine through the long day of summer makes the traveller sigh for

“The uncertain glory of our April day,
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away.”

Nothing more strikingly illustrates the advantages of tempering good with what we call evil, than the mingling of light and darkness to produce that variety which gives zest to visual enjoyment.

PARASITIC VERMIN.

Among the evils of life, the swarms of insects and vermin of all kinds that torment us in summer, and devour our substance, hold a prominent rank. It is, of course, a law of the universe, to which, in common with all animals, we owe the existence of our bodies, that where food is there shall be an eater to consume it. So soon as life springs up, a host of antagonistic forces accompanies, sufficient to insure its final destruction.

Insects are indispensable agents of this kind. Without their aid in devouring refuse animal and vegetable matter, its decomposition would seriously taint the atmosphere. Where this waste most abounds, as in tropical climates, low marshy lands, &c., insects are most numerous; and on high airy ground, where their

agency is least wanted for this purpose, we are relieved from the annoyance.

It may be urged that their ravages would not be objected to if confined to waste material in the season of decay. But it must be considered that time and tender food are required to perfect their birth and growth, ere they can be fitted for the task of devouring the tougher fibres of full-grown plants. Insects, moreover, form the food of nearly all the birds of the air ; and the abundance that remains for man after they have gleaned their harvest should hush the murmurs of complaint.

State agricultural reports of France give to the world a practical illustration of the uses of evil ; and a warning, that in the attempt to make of earth a paradise, by removing any great natural evil, we do but add to our privations and the burdens of toil by the necessary engenderment of a greater scourge.

Committees and officials charged to investigate the causes of the marked deficit in the grain production, and the diseases of the mulberry and the vine, made report to the legislature charging these terrible evils to the destruction of small birds (consequent, we presume, upon cheapened fire-arms). It shows, that, as this fashion goes on increasing, so these vegetable ravages multiply. Petitions flowed in to the emperor from all the departments, awakening conviction of this truth, and begging relief. Among them are some suggesting the importation and distribution of the very kinds of birds they have been destroying, to save them from threatened famine. It becomes thus apparent that thieving birds are actually man's only protection against insects,

which he is powerless to resist ; and the few grains they take from his crop are but a cheap return to the laborer which is worthy of his hire.

Could we but see a little farther, it would be revealed, doubtless, with equal clearness, that all evils, kept down to such safe proportions, are equally the harbingers of good.

THE RIGORS OF WINTER.

“ In pensive Winter,
Man sits at the social board, and, happy, hears
The excluded tempest idly rave along.”

The inclination of the earth's axis to the plane of the ecliptic causes diversity of climates, and the extremes of heat and cold of which we complain. It is, however, by this provision, that the largest portion of the earth is made habitable ; for, otherwise, we of the temperate zone should have had spring, without summer ; and farther north, as well as in corresponding latitudes south of the equator, the country would have been made desolate by perpetual winter. Jupiter alone of the great planets of our solar system seems to be subject to this inconvenience. By the existing arrangements, the greatest variety of production is insured from the smallest number of elements, — a law which our ideas of perfection would suppose essential, and which pervades all Nature. Every latitude has, in this way, advantages peculiar to itself in the growth of some product which is not adapted to other climates.

This brings man out from the caves of selfishness, to make exchanges. Commerce and interchange of thought promote science and art, and elevate the condition of the mass by increasing their comforts. Improvement is carried to barbarous nations, that else would remain unknown ; and emigration and intermarriage save the race of man from that degeneracy which long-continued alliances of the same blood are sure to beget.

The rigors of winter, resulting from this condition in temperate latitudes, destroy vegetation, and compel us, with much labor, to lay up stores of food, fuel, and raiment. The channels of trade close, the plough grows fast in the furrow, the poor are distressed, and robberies multiply. Here is a host of evils.

This increased activity gives to man in these latitudes a body more robust, and intellect more refined, than are found in tropical climates, where he has not that variety of pursuit and enjoyment that gives a zest to life. He is in every way a happier and nobler being than he of the hotter latitudes, who dozes away half his life in lethargic idleness. It is in temperate latitudes that this forced preparation for winter calls out the genius of man, and that all the bright intellectual lights of the earth have appeared. Persons who move to tropical climates always look back with regret upon the varied charms, the lights and shades, of the lands of frost and snow. This seeming evil is, therefore, a real blessing. It is no curse that we earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. Labor is a benevolent contrivance. It is the parent of health, of virtue, of peace of mind, of happiness. Its opposite is the curse ; the parent of disease, of vice, of restless discontent, of *ennui*, and hypochondria.

The use of winter is thus beautifully set forth by Willis: —

“ Winter has come again : the sweet south-west
Is a forgotten wind ; and the strong earth
Has laid aside its mantle to be bound
By the frost fetter. There is not a sound
Save the skater’s heel ; and there is laid
An icy finger on the lip of streams ;
And the clear icicle hangs cold and still ;
And the snow-fall is noiseless as thought.
Spring has a rushing sound, and Summer sends
Many sweet voices with its odors out,
And Autumn rustleth its decaying robe
With a complaining whisper. Winter’s dumb !
God made his ministry a silent one ;
And he has given him a foot of steel,
And an unlovely aspect, and a breath
Sharp to the senses ; and we know that he
Tempereth well, and hath a meaning hid
Under the shadow of his hand. Look up !
And shall it be interpreted ? Your home
Hath a temptation now. There is no voice
Of waters with beguiling for your ear ;
And the cool forest and the meadows green
Witch not your feet away ; and in the dells
There are no sunny places to lie down :
You must go in, and by your cheerful fire
Wait for the offices of love, and hear
Accents of human tenderness, and feast
Your eye upon the beauty of the young.
It is a season for the quiet thought,
And the still reckoning with thyself. The year
“ Gives back the spirits of its dead ; ” and Time
Whispers the history of its vanished hours ;
And the heart calleth his affections up,
Counteth his wasted ingots. Life stands still,
And settles like a fountain ; and the eye
Sees clearly through its depths, and noteth all
That stirred its troubled waters. It is well
That winter with the dying year should come.”

HUNGER.

“ No call is loud
As that of hunger in the ears of man :
Importunate, unreasonable, it constrains
His notice more than all the woes beside.”

Life is motion, stillness is death. Some contrivance, some mainspring, is necessary to stimulate man to activity. Eating is a most ingenious and effective mode of spurring him into perpetual action. It is besides indispensably necessary to repair the waste of the system involved in every movement. Remove this incentive to labor, and who would be found willing to work? What would become of the arts, science, literature, and human progress? They would stop short, and man would sink below the brute!

Eating being a necessity, some monitor is wanted to give notice when food is required; because the organs that elaborate it are wisely placed beyond our control. Hunger is given for this purpose. Whatever pain he gives at times is due to his fidelity as a sentinel. We owe to this monitor's pertinacity our health, our enjoyment, and our very life.

DISEASE AND PAIN.

“ As man, be surè, the moment of his breath
Receives the lurking principle of death :
The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.”

As rivers in their course continually take from the soil they touch, depositing sedimentary matter at cer-

tain points, filling up cavities, turning the current, and overflowing occasionally the banks, damaging yet enriching, and finally choking up the outlet by an impassable barrier, forcing the stream to abandon its channel, and to seek a new outlet ; so it is with the vital stream, the current blood, and the nervous fluid, in their constant course through the thousand arterial, venous, and nervous rivers of the body. Sedimentary deposits accumulate under a law evidently exactly analogous, in fact, identical ; and the obstructions, overflowing humors, diversion from the old channels, the constitutional changes of age, and finally death, are precisely the same, and are intended for the same purposes ; viz., the law of change insuring the final destruction of all material forms. Thus, as age advances, the channels of passion, one after another, are choked up, and new ones are opened. From the currents of confidence, hope, young love, and romance, the vital stream turns into the channels of fear, distrust, ambition, avarice, and superstition. The animal body, nourished by streams bearing solids in suspension, cannot be exempt from the sedimentary law of all liquids in motion.

The higher our civilization, the more our diseases multiply. In savage life, the full and healthy exercise of the chase gives man comparative freedom from disease. The confined employments of civilized communities must be expected to interfere with the healthy action of our delicate organs. If they were less sensitive, they might be better able to resist ; but they would be unfit for the extremely delicate functions they have to perform.

Thus, for instance, the eye must be delicately con-

structed to fit it for the examination of minute objects. Subdivision of labor, which is indispensable to perfection in arts and science, requires that one class of persons shall be engaged in microscopic investigations. The fine texture which is essential to this purpose renders the organ highly sensitive ; and continued imposition of the whole powers of vision upon this finer part of the machinery of the eye inflames and weakens it. To be consistent all around, it could not be otherwise.

Again : the incessant use of one set of muscles in performing one kind of mechanical labor, day after day, during a whole lifetime, must make the accumulation of waste matter unnaturally large in particular directions. Excesses, as gluttony, inebriety, abuse of the passions, affect us in the same way. Hence the organs charged with its absorption and expulsion will be overtasked, and, unless relieved, the machinery must stop.

This would be death. Disease comes in to assist us in this crisis. The patient is obliged to give the parts relief by resting from labor ; and, by physic taken to save him from death, he gets rid of the obstructing humors, and lives. Disease, therefore, is a monitor, warning us against abuses which else would be without correction.

This is the philosophy of disease in general ; and what hunger is to the stomach, pain is to disease. Dyspepsia and gout are but friendly beacons on the shoals of luxury, warning us off. If pain did not drive us to the physician, the unfelt disease would end by hurling us suddenly and unwarned to our long account. But hereditary diseases, it will be urged, cannot be justified by this reasoning. This is true : we must seek their

solution in some other law. Hereditary diseases, which transmit the peculiarities of the parent to the child, are a necessary consequence of the laws of reproduction. "Like begets like." If this conservative law did not exist to the extent we deplore in this instance, our species would soon run into other forms.

Epidemic diseases, which sweep life from the earth with unsparing hand, are the result of a different law, which will be elucidated presently. It is an interesting illustration of the philosophy of evil, that most of the powerful remedial agents of our physicians are in themselves poisonous; yet, by proper administration, they become saviors, and ministers of life and health.

DEATH.

"How swiftly pass our years!
How soon their night comes on!
A train of hopes and fears,
And human life is gone."

We have incontestable proofs in geology that death has been an established law for ages before the appearance of man on this planet. The stratified rocks, for miles in depth, are full of the petrified bodies of organized flesh. Many rocks, a thousand feet in thickness, abound in shell-fish that must have lived and tranquilly died on the spot during centuries of slow accumulation. The great Pyramids of Gizeh contain some twelve millions of tons of nummulitic stone, quarried before the date assigned to the flood of Noah. This limestone is

literally a compact mass of shells and corselets of minute marine fish, so perfectly preserved as to prove that they died quietly and in the usual way. The depth and vast extent of the limestone-deposit whence the material was quarried, render it self-evident that it must have taken many thousands of years to accumulate at the bottom of an ancient sea ; and the same evidence compels us to assign to its formation a date far, very far, before the period of the earliest history of our race.

That physical death was introduced into the world as a penal infliction cannot be reconciled with the host of evidence that proves its origin in the universal law of life.

All fish, a very large proportion of animals, birds, and insects, give proof in their structure that they were created expressly to devour each other. In the very first day,—nay, in the very first hour,—death must have proclaimed its law by the shrieks of ten thousand creatures. So far as man's body is concerned, he is an animal like the rest ; and the provision for renewing and continuing his species, of engendering a substitute, being the same, as his organs attest, the law of ultimate dissolution must have been the same. This conclusion cannot be avoided. Indeed, from the constitution of man's body, it could not have been proof against casualties. A fall, or the impact of weight, must have crushed it ; water must have drowned it ; fire consumed it ; the knife pierced it ; famine starved it ; thirst perished it ; poison corroded it ; foul air and the halter asphyxed it. This establishes the existence of the law in long ages before the era of man, and that, if all animals must die, he cannot be exempt from the general

law, which is the law of all flesh ; but it does not, perhaps, reconcile us to the assertion that the imposition of this great physical evil was at all necessary in the first place. It has been shown that life is a phenomenon resulting from the antagonistic action of matter against matter. There is not a movement we make, not a thought we conceive, that does not necessarily depend for its production upon the death or decomposition of some part of the material organization of the body ; else eating would not be required to renew the spent material : so that, if death be not active in his work every moment, there can be no life. The unphilosophic mind views life and death as it does good and evil, — as attributes the most opposite in their natures : yet they are twin-brothers, and co-workers at one business ; nay, they are two persons, so to say, in one.

If this be true, the same circumstances that are favorable to life should be equally so to death. We find this is the case. Oxygen, that is the grand supporter of life, is the great agent that destroys it. In taking apart the elements of a body by the process we call death, the only possible means are adopted to furnish materials for the creation of a new one ; just as the stone-mason demolishes the old walls, and uses them in the construction of a new one ; or, to come still nearer home, just as a man destroys a sheep to make new flesh for himself. He is equally the agent of life and death in the transaction.

Moreover, the moist, sultry heat of summer, which gives most vigorous growth to vegetation that supports animal life, and the vivifying thunder-showers also, are most favorable to the rapid decomposition of dead

and dying matter. That condition of the atmosphere, also, that produces sweeping epidemics, scattering death around us, gives equal stimulus to the process of generation ; for it is well known to all medical men that a prodigious increase of births is sure to follow. If it were not a law of matter that its elements should be separable from existing combinations, how could creation proceed? how could man build his house, weave his cloth, or get sustenance from food? Even the air could not be inhaled, and made to give vitality to his blood.

Constant collision among the complicated machinery of the body must end, as with the knife and the grinding-stone, in wearing it out at last. If it were otherwise, if one set of forms remained alway, space would soon be filled up, leaving neither room nor material elements for new ones. At this moment, there are, say, a thousand millions of people on this earth, and loud cries are made of over-population. In a single century, four times that number of souls are born, act their allotted parts, and sink into their long repose. How many thousands of years since would the earth have been packed with people, had there been no death! And what a spectacle should we have had now! — the same trees and the same carpet of grass arrested in mid growth, and the aged men and women. No: here is a difficulty at the very outset. The laws of reproduction (with a multitude of analogous laws) must have been suddenly annihilated, and all the organs and passions created for their use must have been removed. The distinction of sexes, the only bond of union that holds society together, having been removed, society

must have been dissolved, and we should be men and women no longer. It will be perceived at once that a thousand difficulties of this sort will spring up in carrying out a supposition of the kind ; each one of which would reduce to an impossibility the theory that man's body could have been saved from dissolution under the necessary laws of creation.

MODES OF DEATH.

There is an order
Of mortals on earth who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without violence of warlike death :
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,
Some of disease, and some of insanity,
And some of withered or of broken hearts ;
For this last is a malady that slays
More than are numbered in the lists of fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.

MANFRED.

It being established that death is a necessary evil, an indispensable law, it is accordant with all other laws of creation, that every variety of means should be devised to insure its execution. In truth, the varied casualties to which life is necessarily exposed make this a matter of course.

For this cause it is that epidemics, wars, famine, and the like, sweep over the earth, pruning out exuberant life. All are but varied modes of effecting that which, at some time and in some way, must befall every man

at last. If the choice were left to every man *how* he should die, so great is the diversity of tastes, as exhibited for instance among suicides, that it is highly probable very little variation would take place from existing modes. This variety in time and circumstance keeps us in happy ignorance. Dread of death and whatever pain attends it are necessary to protect life. Even with all its horrors, how often do the weary and broken-hearted pray for rest in

“ That solemn, silent, simple spot,
The mouldering realms of peace,
Where human passions are forgot,
And human follies cease ” !

We have no reason to suppose that any needless suffering attends the dying hour. The struggle is often relieved by insensibility ; and the antecedent pains prepare us, tired of life, to meet as an angel of mercy the messenger who leads us to the peaceful shores of the silent land.

“ O land, O land
For all the broken hearted !
The wildest herald by our faith allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand,
To lead us with a gentle hand
To the land of the great departed,
Into the silent land ! ”

The repulsiveness of death, too, — the rapid and loathsome decay of the body, — is a wise provision to drive away the living from the clay they reverence.

Alas for man !
The herb in its humility may fall,
And waste into the bright and genial air ;

While we, by hands that ministered in life
Nothing but love to us, are thrust away,
The earth flung upon our just cold bosoms,
And the warm sunshine trodden out forever.

WILLIS.

MAN'S LONG INFANCY AND HIS WEAK PHYSICAL POWER.

“Man's cares are eased with intervals of bliss,
His little children climbing for a kiss.”

The long infancy of man, and his weak physical powers, compared with those of other animals, are the source of many evils; but reflection will show, that here also is a nice adaptation between our wants and the means given to supply them. Man has much to learn to fit him for the varied employments of civilized life. In proportion as the means of subsistence are obtained with less labor and skill, as in savage life and equatorial climates, his period of infancy is shortened, and he ripens earlier.

What substitute can we suggest for the blessed influence of children in drawing out the tenderest and most ennobling emotions of the soul; keeping up a healthy ripple on the surface that would else be frozen with selfishness! Their little voices soften the heart of the most abandoned; and, like guardian angels, they turn our steps from the paths of vice. Wretched is the man who reaches the climax of age without these green vines twined around him, drawing sustenance, and returning protecting moral shade!

The telescopic vision of the eagle, and the microscopic eye of the insect, would have been equally unsuited to our daily wants. The lion's strength could not have been ours, without sacrificing the ample play of the arm, and the wonderful mechanism of the hand, without which the constructive powers of the human mind would have availed us as little as if we had been brutes.

The physical weakness of our race is an excellent arrangement to promote the social virtues. It compels man as often as possible to call in the aid of his fellow, thus multiplying the offices of reciprocal kindness. It is his weakness, too, that stimulates his ingenuity, and gives exercise to his reason to overcome the defect by mechanical devices and the centration of labor. This is the foundation of his greatness !

ROTATION OF THE WHEEL OF LIFE.

“Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, and fertility : she dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.”

In all the works of God this antagonistic principle prevails ; one thing against another. (See Eccles. xxxiii. 11, &c.)

To insure action, which is the essence of life, all nature is made a system of violence. Warring elements crumble into powder the stubborn rock : the herb takes root, and robs it of its nourishment. Beasts of the field attack it, in turn, and fatten on its destruction. Presently beasts of prey pounce upon them, and make

a meal. Death smites them next: their carcasses feed the vultures, and their bones make a meal for the hyena. When these are filled, a swarm of insects find in what is left a rich repast, ere they themselves are swallowed by the next consumer. Each one has had his share, and each has contributed to the general enjoyment. In every case, the destruction of one has been necessary to the sustenance of another. Nothing has been lost in the process; for notwithstanding the vast crowds of animals cropping the open prairies, and being surrounded by others devouring them and each other, the return of every spring shows no diminution in the numbers of the animals, nor stint in the luscious food that is spread for their repast.

Of all animals, man is the most destructive. He pursues the great Leviathan within the polar circle to light his house. He ransacks the sea and land in every latitude; he slays and plunders with unsparing hand. He enslaves the horse and the camel; he robs and slaughters the ox, the sheep, and the swine. The fowl and the insect do not escape his rapacity. He levies taxes in kind, and his storerooms are filled to overflowing. It is thus he gathers his food and his raiment, the balsam for his diseases, and the fuel that cheers and illuminates his hearth. Every year he increases in numbers, in spite of the ravages of disease and death; and every season opens to him as bountiful a supply as before, undiminished by his rapacity. Occasionally in civilized life, often in his savage estate, he falls a prey in turn to the beast of the field and the monster of the deep. If he escape these casualties, he is delivered up at last to make food for the worms of earth. "All

things were made for me," says man while he eats his mutton ; " All things were made for us," say the worms as they eat the fallen man.

Thus we see the chain of natural dependence that binds all created things, animate and inanimate, link by link, in one community of interest. One law encircles, directs, and confines the whole, each within its proper sphere. The evil that befalls the one, the other cannot escape.

Motion, therefore contending forces, therefore wearing-out, therefore disease and death, — the necessary lot of all.

THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE LAWS OF NATURE.

It is useless to multiply illustrations. The same principles prevail throughout the universe. Every thing is subservient to fixed, eternal, and unalterable laws, by which alone could be effected any determinate purpose that must have been the object of creation.

Not a movement can take place except in obedience to some inflexible law. The uncertain shower of April, the ever-changing form of fleeting clouds, the misstep you make, all obey a law from which there is no escape. Nothing can happen that is not a necessary consequence of events that preceded it. Were it otherwise, no system, no plan of creation, would be carried out, and Omniscience would be inconceivable.

In our ignorance of causes, we refer events to what

we call *chance*. The true definition of this word is “an unseen cause ;” and the explanation saves the necessity of comment.

“ All nature is but art unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony not understood ;
All partial evil, universal good :
And spite of pride, and erring reason’s spite,
One truth is clear, — whatever is, is right.”

PROOF THAT ALL EVIL IS A LAW OF CREATION.

By what means do we certainly know any thing to be an established law of Nature ? By its continued recurrence from day to day, from year to year, and from generation to generation, so that man himself can certainly predict periodical results dependent on the same. Now, all physical evils are reducible to tabular computation in this way. From year to year, in every city, a certain average number of houses are destroyed by fire ; a certain amount of property is lost by house-breaking ; a certain percentage of ships at sea, and merchandise afloat, is lost ; a certain average is maintained in the deaths by different diseases and casualties. Tables are constructed upon this doctrine of “ chances,” as it is called, by which insurance is effected against risks of every kind ; and the experience of ages has proved that the laws are absolute and invariable. The same tabular computation may be applied with equal certainty to all the physical evils of life.

This establishes the fact beyond contradiction, that all existing physical evils are a part of the grand scheme of creation. That they are a *necessary* part, the study of all we have treated makes manifest ; and, by pursuing the same system of inquiry, the useful purpose of every evil may be demonstrated.

What can be more unprofitable than our daily complaints of these evils, and our prayers for their aversion, seeing that they are the unavoidable results of the wisest laws ?

Nothing so effectually checks the disposition to complain as the study of those laws, which is the object of this treatise.

EVIL IS A RELATIVE TERM.

Take almost any of the evils we deprecate, and examine it singly, and you will find thousands protesting against its removal. Not a public improvement, no grant of any kind, can be asked of a government, but there will be opposition to show that the same thing which is good to some is evil to others ; proving that evil is not an entity, but that, like the chameleon, every thing is colored alternately as we vary the position from which we view it : and the very same thing thus becomes, in turn, good and evil. If we are cold, fire is good ; if we are hot, it is evil. What is evil to one is good to another. The rain that ruins the harvester blesses the miller and the boatman. The scanty market the seller craves is bitterness to the buyer ; and the rosy health we

pray for beggars the doctor, the nurse, and the apothecary. Carrion and train-oil are offensive to us, but sweet savored to the vulture and the Esquimaux. Snakes and henbane are poison to us, but they delight and fatten swine. What can be more nauseating than tobacco! yet it gives priceless enjoyment to millions. Fire sears our flesh; but, if it had not this consumptive power, it would not cook our food, nor burn the fuel that warms our hearths and ministers to our varied necessities. Even the watering of spirits, and other adulterations that put unjust gains into the pocket of the vender, give often to the buyer, by reducing a too concentrated diet, protection from diseases he blindly courts.

NO GOOD WITHOUT EVIL.

“ Mark what unvarying laws preserve each State, —
Laws wise as Nature, and as fixed as fate.”

Nothing better illustrates the even distribution of good and evil, and the impossibility of concentrating all advantages in any one department, than a search for a country-residence. In whatever direction we look, we find that necessarily, where one set of desirable qualities exists, there will be a corresponding set of equivalent disadvantages.

Hills give us fine prospects, healthy air, refreshing breezes, no insects, good roads, farinaceous grain, sweet grasses, &c.; but the soil is thin, water is scarce, early and late frosts destroy our fruits, our labor is doubled,

and tillage is more costly. Emigrants to the Western American States are tempted by the rich alluvial plains, where, with little labor, rank crops are secured; but they must accept, as a necessary condition of the situation which produces these benefits, damp atmosphere, pestilent diseases, bad roads, confined prospect, annoying vermin, rank weeds, and insufferable heat. Big corn, big fevers, is American experience.

This system of compensation runs through all Nature, and tends to equalize the enjoyment of men in every variety of climate and circumstance. Where one sense is defective, the rest become more acute. The blind, obliged to depend on feeling, acquire an exceeding delicacy of touch.

If we expect to find what our fancy calls perfection, we shall be disappointed: it is this delusion that drives delicately-balanced minds to misanthropy and suicide.

The air is not all oxygen, else its purity, instead of sustaining, would destroy life. Valleys cannot be without hills, meat without bones to support it, fruit without seed, appetite without hunger, hardness without greater resistance, sharpness without increased danger of wounding, the endearment of children without the cares of supporting them, delicate organs without greater liability to derangement.

NO EVIL WITHOUT GOOD.

Natural obstacles are a source of greatness. Narrow insolation sends Britain afar to conquer room for life. Thus she spreads civilization, sows artificial wants, cre-

ates commerce, multiplies industry, and enlarges her dominion.

At home, prolific numbers with stint of sunshine and of surface set her wits to delving beneath the surface for values to give in exchange for the bread denied above. The factory system is an offspring of similar necessity : see how it has brought the world into her commercial subjection !

France, by comparison, finds obstacles at first disheartening. She would rival her neighbor in manufacturing. Skill she has, and cheap labor ; but coal for working-power is too scarce. This very want, this evil, will be the making of the empire.

A commission reports to government how to remedy the defect in such a way as to conquer several other evils incidentally, and greatly to add to the wealth of the nation. The Rhone has every year overflows that carry destruction along its course. This comes from the incapacity of its channel to give safe conduction to the volume of waters which the great water-shed of the snowy Alps at times pours down in sudden torrents.

There is a broad belt of high table-land, running east and west, from the Alps to the coast of France. For want of water, it is nearly barren.

Three great wants are here. Too much water in one direction, a scarcity in another. From manufacturers in one direction comes a cry for water-power, while too much water-power is the evil of the Rhone country.

The commission suggests a practical plan by which cheap reservoirs can be made to take off the floods, and thus supply irrigation by canal to the vast country now desolate from drought, and to create water-powers

equal to the largest demand of industry. It will redeem the banks of the Rhone, it will convert the destructive sun-baking of Central France into the most valuable ripening power, and it will create a grand highway of cheap water-communication of priceless estimation !

Why does America lead the world in mechanic invention and ingenious devices ? Because of sundry evils that give spur to invention. Her too costly labor oppresses her producers with foreign goods. This compels invention of machinery to cheapen production. The slavish devotion to gain that knows no holidays, and the exhaustive effects of a stimulant climate that sallows the complexion, flattens the bosom, and tans the liver, give to the brain a marvelous quickness, and a sharpness of insight beyond the measure of other nationalities.

Till lately, the sinks of our cities have been a terrible evil. See how we have learned, by pressure of necessity, not only to get rid of the evil, but to convert it into a blessing, by a system of drainage that gives it useful direction over the fields !

Evil is a wonderful contrivance, that brings out the highest powers of the mind as nothing else could do. It is in battling against it that we find exercise and health. How much of it we even turn to profit ! — so much, that one is led to suspect that all evil is equally convertible into good ; and that Providence permits no evil that it does not work into final good.

ABORTIVE STRUGGLES TO GET UNADULTERATED GOOD.

The orchard and the vineyard furnish instructive lessons. Why do our fruit-trees degenerate more than formerly? What has overcome the vines and the mulberry-trees of Europe? The reason is quite apparent. Cultivators have tampered with Nature in its most delicate and exigent law, generation. If there be any law that forces its explication on us more than others, it is that where art seeks to restrict Nature to the growth of a few varieties, having only such qualities as serve certain purposes, and thus interferes with the law of constant variation that is necessary to health: loss of vigor is the penalty. The plant runs into scrofulous precocity, that makes it a prey to spring frosts, insect ravages, diseased leaves, untimely fruit-fall, and early decay. Visiting with a New-England friend an orchard of grafted trees planted by his father in A. D. 1800, decay was conspicuous in every tree; but the older come-by-chance apple-trees, that were here and there outside the orchard-ground, were vigorous and fruitful. The owner said he could not account for it. The orchard-trees had always received careful attention, the others none at all. Transplanting is a weakening process, grafting is another; but ingrafting ever the same varieties is like inbreeding among cattle, and intermarrying of cousins. Constant pruning to force larger fruitage is destroying the vigor of the vines, like analagous prostitution of the powers in manhood.

The mulberry-trees of Europe are degenerating from similar causes. They cut and carve for large leafage, and they strip as closely as they dare. Both processes make tender leaves and over-juicy ; and these scour the worms, which, in turn, make fragile silk when they escape the untimely fate of sickly constitutions. Other causes are killing the silk-worms. It is the fashion to select only the largest cocoons for generation. The eggs of these are by no means the most vigorous ; probably the reverse. Certainly, the unnatural exclusion of all others tends to degeneracy. Were only the biggest men and women mated, we should expect similar consequences. Nature, left to its own coupling, gives us safer guidance.

The remedy for diseases from ingrafting is obvious. The stock degenerating from abuse must be referred back to Nature. We should be ever cultivating new varieties from the seed ; and, in making selections from these, it may prove wise to allow some to stand among the rest that may not suit our taste : but their strong pollen may give vigor to the fruitage of those that do.

The lesson we derive from these revelations is that unmixed good is not healthful nor profitable for us ; that it is not to be obtained by any device ; that, when we are getting measurably a preponderance of good, we should be content to bear, in patient submission to inexorable law, the smaller proportion of evil, with which, for reasons we cannot question, it has pleased Providence to season all its blessings.

THE HARMONY OF NATURE.

The whole broad earth is beautiful
To minds attuned aright ;
And, wheresoe'er thy feet are turned,
A smile will meet thy sight.
The city, with its bustling walk,
Its splendor, wealth, and power ;
A ramble by the river-side ;
A passing summer flower ;
The meadow green ; the ocean swell ;
The forest waving free, —
Are gifts of God, and speak in tones
Of kindness to thee.

CAROLINE GILMAN.

To view Nature rightly, to appreciate the wisdom and beauty of its laws, we must look upon it as we do upon a scenic painting on the stage. If we draw too near, and examine too closely, we see a confused mass of blots, blurs, and indistinct nebulae. It is only when we view it from such a distance as enables us to command the whole landscape, with all its lights and shades, that its beauties become apparent, and the dark spots show their usefulness. In truth, if each object on the canvas were drawn elaborately perfect, so as to please the microscopic eye, the picture would want that blending of the objects, that running into each other, which gives softness and finish to the perfect landscape.

If we view the great works of creation in this manner, we cannot fail to observe the beauty and harmony of the whole. What shade is to the landscape, evil is

to the scheme of Providence. It is the pepper, the salt, and the mustard, which, taken separately, are evil to the taste, but, being blended in proper proportions with our food, give it grateful flavor and healthy digestion.

Let him who would know his own nature, and the relation in which he stands to his Creator and to his fellow-man, direct his study to those ever-living revelations of the purpose and will of Heaven that are open to all mankind alike in the works of creation. He who contemplates the Deity in his works will feel ever conscious of his immediate presence. The love that breathes throughout will inspire him with kindred goodness; and his heart, if it be not adamant, cannot incline to iniquity.

“ One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil, and of good,
Than all the sages can.”

Truth flows from every rill. Rich maxims sparkle in the dewdrops. The clustered fruit and golden corn proclaim a bounteous Providence. Each mated pair breathes a lesson of love. The lambkins commend us to cheerfulness and innocence of heart. There is music from heaven in the tree-tops and in the surf along the shore. In the crowded haunts of men, the very murmur of mixed voices is melodious. In the green fields and woody shades, the happy songsters proclaim a soul of beneficence somewhere presiding, that turns all partial evil into universal good.

PART SECOND.



MORAL EVIL.

MORAL EVIL.

WHAT IS MORAL LAW?

“I form the light, and I create darkness ; I make peace, and I create evil : I the Lord do all these things.”

THE moral law is not easy to separate from the physical or natural law by any clearly-marked line of distinction ; so intimately are they related, and so absolute is the dependence of moral law upon the initiative of physical restriction and natural or necessary compulsion. As the fish is compelled to murderous propensities to get his living in the element in which he is placed by Nature ; so is man necessarily provided with instincts, passions, and propensities to be used under requirement of the physical elements in which he is to live and move.

The brain in man, and in all living animals that have it, is the organ that produces all mental manifestations, by elaboration from the material supplied in daily food. The organ is under physical or natural law : but, in man's case, the manifestations assume the name of mind ; and there the law which governs changes its name to moral law, and it is supposed, in a sense at least, to become independent of natural law. But this is not without difficulty. The mind is swayed by what we eat and drink. If the brain be malformed or distempered, or injured in its organs, the mind partakes of its defects,

as a child takes after its parents. This involves interesting questions as to how far the physical control the moral results. There appears to be so much intimacy and dependence between the spirit and the material elements, that we must conclude they are subject to one common law. Every step in the examination of moral evil corroborates this probability.

The moral law we shall consider as that which concerns the social intercourse of mankind ; that which gives to man mental pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, and a sense of responsibility to an overruling Providence. Whatever is unpleasant to us in this circuit we call moral evil.

After the same manner as we treated of physical evil, we propose to examine, separately, the most prominent moral evils that afflict mankind ; to show that each has its useful purpose ; that it is indispensable as a law of social structures ; that without it there could be no moral life ; and that, in all cases, it is only the element from which good is elaborated. To what useful end can this study conduce ? It will teach us that it is the pleasant task of Heaven to be continually making good out of evil ; that it has bestowed upon us the same institution, that we, too, may find pleasure in following the example ; that, to fit us for this duty, we must first well understand the nature of evil and the laws which govern it. This accomplished, we learn to love and practice the art of turning the evils of life to advantage ; to deal kindly with the erring, turning him from his ways ; and to bear with resignation such evils as our efforts fail to convert into the special form of immediate good that may seem to us as individually desirable.

THE MORAL WORLD ALSO REVOLVES.

“What is the moral of all human tales ?

’Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, —

First freedom, and then glory ; when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption.”

The earth has its ever-changing circuits. Where the arctic circle now is, probably once was the torrid zone, as the bodies of its huge elephants now seem to attest. Land is rising here, and sinking there. Islands are forming everywhere in the Pacific Ocean, so much in line as to make it surely, in time, a new continent. What is surface everywhere now is daily being washed away to take its place below the present soil.

So nations, offspring of the earth, rise and fall. For a time, they flourish ; then luxury, oppression, and corruption send them to decay, and a new birth begins. Egypt, Greece, and Rome are examples.

Men, being the atoms that compose nations, must necessarily be subject to this law of birth, progress, and decay ; and there is a new birth in the descendants that take their vacated places. The analogy is so strong, that we cannot escape the conviction that all are subject to one common law, and are impelled in their circuits by the same fundamental necessity. It will be seen that what we call the evils of life are the driving powers that give us, also, never-ceasing movement around our allotted moral circuits.

CIVILIZATION AND ITS INEVITABLE EVILS.

The first necessary step in civilization is the division of property, and the union of many for the maintenance of that division. No improvement can be made until this security is afforded to individual industry. Each one, then, surrenders a certain portion of his individual liberty for the common welfare. This restraint is the first evil; and it furnishes a clear elucidation of the use of all moral evils, viz., it is the single grain of corn taken from the granary to secure a harvest of many grains.

Life is a system of wants impelling us to action, and of gratifications in supplying them. Had we no wants, we should have no pleasures; for pleasure is a want supplied. As civilization increases our comforts, it must multiply our wants, else progress would stop. For this indispensable purpose, ambition, pride, envy, avarice, fashion, and a host of other evils, start up to stimulate us to healthy activity. Not one of these agents can be spared. Having exhausted home-resources, we long for things dear-bought and far-fetched. This whim, so much ridiculed, has a highly useful effect. It opens commercial and social intercourse between distant parts of the earth. Here a new set of devices draws out the human mind. Geography, astronomy, naval architecture, international law, and a thousand arts and sciences connected with them, open a vast field for the exercise of labor and the development of genius, that would else remain dormant.

The nicest perfection of art is requisite for scientific instruments and for all accurate meters. The most slavish subdivision of labor is rendered necessary to secure this nicety. Complicated laws are essential to regulate and protect the varied interests that grow out of the intricacies of extended trade and commerce. From the industrial ranks is taken an army of legislators, judges, officers, &c., who must be fed by the producing classes. This taxation is looked upon as an evil; but who can fail to see its necessity? The apparent remuneration of the laborer is but a small portion of his reward. He enjoys his share of the security and the comforts which only a government well administered and thus sustained can afford. Withdraw his contribution, and let the government cease to extend its protection to commerce and to individual possessions, and the market of the laborer would be closed, his farm ravaged, and himself driven to his cave for shelter.

OVERPRODUCTION.

As wealth accumulates, and machinery multiplies, production becomes in excess of consumption. This grinds the face of the hand-worker, and the tradesman grows unscrupulous. Yet excess of production is the parent of all trade and commerce, the mother of plenty. It should be the last of our complaints, and the first in rank of our thankful aspirations. Whenever it is wanting, monopoly plays the oppressor and the tyrant. For one that suffers from too much bread, a thousand are blessed.

In the natural arrangement of the elemental movements, there are ever-changing variations of weather due to laws that are for the best, — rain here, and drought there. In any series of years, each finds he gets his average complement, and by easy devices. It is in the power of all peoples to drain off the excess of water, and to supply moisture as the occasion may require. England gives us example of the one, Lombardy of the other: and, where it is impractical to follow, Providence supplies Artesian springs, that turn even the deserts of Algeria to fertility; showing for how many of the larger evils there is a remedy in our own hands

The season that favors one crop is seldom, from the difference of requirement, the best for some other crops. But, for every country that is short, there are always over-stocks elsewhere, which commerce is quick to supply; and the price is an excellent gauge to indicate how earnest is the want.

Overproduction is a useful device to promote intercourse, and to activate the arts and sciences incident to navigation and commerce, besides promoting health by appetizing interchange of food. The great inventive spirit of the age comes from the spur of overproduction.

THE LABOR-MOVEMENT.

There is a movement so general in America for reducing the hours of labor, that we regard it as a providential inspiration. It seems as if it were a necessary link in the chain of circumstances, that makes a new

era in the progress of high civilization. Plenty, very great abundance, we should be thankful for ; but when superabundance of machine-production throws human hands out of the means of earning bread, and makes unhealthy engorgement in all the channels of trade, it becomes us to seek a remedy in check of the excess of evil.

This movement for reducing the toil of the hand-worker seems a sure remedy so far as it goes. If the abridgment were general, it would work good to many, and evil to nobody. No proposition can be more reasonable than this ; viz., that, when machinery is so generally taking the place of hand-labor, it ought to be its first good effect to relieve the human workers of some hours of toil : else the working-men do not get their direct share of the benefits. Though indirectly they derive certain advantages of increased comforts, still there is a balance of relief due to them ; and we feel sure, that, in according it, every interest will be benefited. So great, indeed, is the pressure of mechanical overproduction, making employment precarious, that it might not be unwise legislation, if it could be enforced, to cut down production by prohibiting men from working more than eight hours a day.

But, say some people, how will they employ this new leisure ? Will it not induce vice ?

Let us see. Our system of public schools has brought our mechanics up to a point of education that fits them, not only by mental ability, but by taste and strong appetite, for safe intrustment in this matter. Why has Providence put it into the national head to thus instruct the laborer, and give him appetite for cul-

tivation of mind, if it do not also provide corresponding leisure for the exercise of this inspiration? Already we see everywhere proofs that Providence has fully prepared our mechanics for the purpose.

Their public libraries rival those of the merchant-class; they crowd our lecture-rooms; they read the journals. Their own mechanic journals are full of talent. In places of high trust, in halls of legislation, wherever placed, they are not inferior.

Scarce a man amongst them that is not informed on the issues of the day. The mechanic of to-day is far above the mechanic of former days.

Say you that all this does not point to a concession of time as a necessary link to complete the chain of providential adaptation? We look upon the overtasked lot of the laboring classes as an evil that is doubled by educating them; and we believe this movement is designed to bring this evil within bounds, which the attendant circumstances of the age imperiously demand.

“TRUTH IS MIGHTY, AND WILL PREVAIL.”

The progress of error was always and ever will be more rapid than the march of truth. Men listen with appetite to the seductions of evil doctrines, because they are usually presented in attractive form, and pressed with eloquence. Truth is severe: it unwisely scorns to use means to win people to its acceptance. For this reason, what is called orthodoxy gives us dull sermons, while heterodoxy keeps us awake. If orthodoxy would

spend half the eloquence in the service of truth that it does in fighting against error, our churches would do a power of good.

Let any new truth be announced in science or in moral philosophy, orthodoxy only requires to know that it does not square with its doctrines, and at once it is down on the innovation with merciless condemnation. It values an old error always above a new truth, as if the dark ages alone could know truth, and nothing but error remained after the exhaustion of their wisdom.

It is not truth but fiction that prevails in the world. Seventy-five per cent of all our reading and moralistic moulding is derived from works of fiction.

It is so ordained, that, without constant care, the purest wheat will run into tares; and the purest truth runs soon to error if no one is interested to keep it constantly weeded of corruptions. There is no miraculous protection of truth from this tendency, so necessary to keep our minds in activity and our hearts in earnest.

Fear of investigation is alike suspicious in theology, in jewelry, and in science. Eternal vigilance and the largest freedom are the only safeguards of truth against corruption.

Truth and genuine diamonds court inspection. You are sure it is untruth, or paste jewelry, when it fears and denounces investigation.

GAMBLING.

Among all the children of men, gambling in some form has existed from the beginning. Every tribe of Indians has its games of hazard; but the higher the civilization, the greater the gambling. Here is a sequence that gives us a clew to its uses.

All trade and commerce between the nations of the world originate, and are sustained and quickened, by the spirit of adventure, — the nerve to put at risk one dollar on the chance of losing, or of getting two in exchange. Whether this is done by bull and bear adventures on the stock-exchange, in buying and selling on time-risks in the grain-market, by mercantile ventures abroad, by betting on horse-racing, cock-fights, elections, or by games of chess or cards, it is the same inborn spirit seeking outlet. From its universality, it so savors of law, that we suspect it is necessary to some useful purpose in the human economy that it have exercise and outlet. But some forms have cheating. Alas! deception is in all forms. In the various temperaments that make up the circles of human character, some have preference for one kind of gambling, some for another. This is in the nature of things. It is only at the extreme end of the long and complex line of its exercise, that we condemn it, and call it criminal. To destroy the love of hazard is not possible. The best we can do is to win over the players from such forms as offend public sentiment, by attracting them to other forms less objectionable. Some attempt in this way is seen at the

public gaming-tables at German watering-places ; and certainly stock-gaming is working wonders in the same direction. The struggle for life oppresses the brain and hardens the heart. Exhilaration of some kind is a necessary relief. Gambling is one of this kind, and it breeds more generous impulses than shopkeeping.

DISPARITY OF CONDITION.

“Read the world’s history, and treasure deep
The sad lesson : ne’er was palace made
But the thatched hovel sprang beneath its shade.”

If there were no disparity in the physical aspects of men, we should have no means of distinguishing one from another. If all had the same tastes and capacities, every man would pursue the same object, and crave the same food. It is only by giving the greatest diversity to our tastes, that we eat up every thing, and every branch of industry is supplied with talent adequate to its wants.

Society is a vast complex working-machine, whose parts are men. A variety of complicated work is required. Some parts are necessarily arranged to do the heavier work ; others will be very delicate, to finish the lighter fabrics. “The governor” of the engine, meantime, has only the task to move its arms, and the whole machine obeys.

The exigencies of social life make it necessary that some do the thinking and planning. Some must direct, others must account : some branches of labor are coarse,

others fine. Custom, like a second nature, habituates men to their branch of work. The skin-dresser and the tanner observe no smell; and snuff-makers do not sneeze. The miner gets to like the darkness and even temperature under ground, and prefers not to work above ground, however others may be attracted by daylight and blue sky.

If wealth did not accumulate in some hands, no public work, no commerce, could be conducted. If all had wealth, nobody would work, and material progress would cease. The great stimulus to progress is the love of wealth. It promotes industry and frugal habits; it sustains ambition, and it gives to every power of invention a sustained quickening that no other device could assure. Wealth and poverty are the two extremes, the system of rewards and punishments, which, as in all religions, are indispensable to induce men to take the better course, and to deter them from idleness and vice.

It is because there is a necessity for the evils of disparity of condition; and it is a proof of that necessity, that all schemes to equalize conditions by organization of social communities have ever proved short-lived and impracticable.

RICH AND POOR MEN.

“’Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perked up in a glittering grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.”

In the unequal distribution of wealth, Providence has not been so partial as the poor man imagines. The

difference in the amount of happiness between two persons depends upon their unsatisfied wants. Who ever saw a rich man have enough? In the drawing-rooms of the affluent, "luxury lies straining its low thought to form unreal wants," which, being too easily supplied, confer little pleasure. Their food is not seasoned with appetite, and indigestion turns it to disease. The wants of the humble are few, natural, and healthy. The bread of the poor may be hard to get; he may sigh for the hour of repose: but, when obtained, mark with what excellent appetite he enjoys them! He has vassals and serfs that wealth cannot command; and no costly conserves are so sweet as those that finish his repast. Appetite and digestion wait, and health is the priceless dessert. No gorgeous tapestry that adorns the canopy of luxury can match the rosy dreams that bedeck the couch of the lowly.

"'Tis shameful to hear you complain!" said a nobleman to a beggar who devoured his morsel before him. "I'd give half my fortune for your appetite!"

When the laborer is engaged in earning his honest bread, mischief sleeps, and virtue is secure. Idleness is the parent of vice. The horrors of *ennui* drive its victim to the haunts of shame, where, for morbid excitement, he barter health and happiness.

"The rich man," says the Chinese proverb, "is a pig encumbered with fat." No figure can be more appropriate. As wealth accumulates, the dread of using it accompanies, generosity fades, charity is shut out, and, when a trifle is lost, how it afflicts the soul! Wealth thus becomes a burden that is dragged along with pain through life; and, when death comes, how bitter the parting!

“ They call him rich ; I deem him poor :
Since if he dare not use his store,
But saves it for his heirs,
The treasure is not his, but theirs.”

That the man of wealth does not work, that he is free from care, is a great mistake. The toil of the mechanic has its hour of limit, and sound sleep gives him certain refreshment. The toil of head-work never ceases. The cares and anxieties of the rich haunt their midnight hours, and poison sleep.

“ Sleep, gentle sleep,
Nature’s soft nurse, how doth care affright thee !
That thou no more wilt weigh the eyelids down,
And steep the senses in forgetfulness.”

The miserly propensities that grow up with wealth make the rich man, at best, a hard-working, ever-wakeful watchman, hired at mean wages to guard a treasure. It avails himself nothing. Who ever saw a man made really more happy, more benevolent, more virtuous, by growing rich ? What, then, have the poor to envy ? “ Plenty of money, and nothing to do ! ” They know not what they ask. The physical surplus cannot enter their domain without making room by displacing all the moral treasures that give to life its sweetness. Nothing can be more pernicious than the practice of exciting the poor against the rich, seeing that accumulations of wealth are indispensable to the progress of civilization. Indeed, if freedom from care, and the possession of happiness, be the true objects of desire, the gilded clay of the wealthy should not excite the envy of the wise.

THE USE OF ROGUES AND THIEVES.

In much wisdom, God has made the varied characters of men : some exalted and blessed, some low and cursed ; good against evil, life against death. In all the works of God, this antagonist principle prevails, — one thing against another. (See Eccles. xxxiii. 11, and xlii. 24).

Production and consumption go hand in hand together in every department of Nature. Wherever life springs up, antagonist powers arise to prey on its exuberance, and to insure its final destruction. Every living thing has its parasites, and its consumptive diseases. Without this provision, there would be no food and no eaters : there would be no life. Human possessions, which are also Nature's products, must be subject to the same laws of course.

It has been shown, that, for indispensable purposes, wealth must form accumulations in some hands. It is equally necessary for the safety of society that this tendency shall be kept within some limits. Now, there is no occupation in which men are so unceasingly, untiringly engaged, as in the pursuit of wealth.

“The universal idol, gold,
In homage each unites ;
Without a temple he's adored,
And he has no hypocrites.”

To keep in check so powerful a tendency, and to insure redistribution, the most vigorous, violent, and unceasing measures are evidently imperative. Nature gives the example. She sets the elements at work to dilapidate

our walls, — fires to consume, storms to wreck, our property. Even the infant raindrop, the soft zephyr, and the smiling river, cannot visit us without carrying away something. Birds, beasts of prey, armies of insects, rats and mice, weeds, and a host of allies, are the natural thieves and robbers provided for this useful purpose. There is not a useful plant that grows that has not a counterfeit to awaken our vigilance.

For the distribution of artificial accumulations, a set of equally numerous, equally violent, and every way analogous antagonists must be provided under this law. Men only can perform this function; and we find no lack of vagabonds for the occasion. In no department is the call of Nature more promptly answered. Swindlers, robbers, counterfeiters, though held up to exclusive ignominy, constitute a very insignificant proportion of the innumerable host of plunderers necessary for a work so extensive. It needs a process analogous to the constant and invisible evaporation by which the great waters are taken up and redistributed. And just such a contrivance is provided. Petty cheating, specious beggars, gamblers, small thieving, speculative schemes, and the like, do more in this way, a thousand-fold, than all that is paraded on the criminal calendars. This provision is yet not entirely adequate to the purpose, as may be observed in periods of long-continued prosperity. Accumulations oppress the morals, and beget inordinate pride, vice, and corruption. To check this, Providence sends a special commission in the form of stock-bubbles, and all sorts of wild speculations, that enfever the public brain like an epidemic, and that do not let up till there has been such healthy depletion as the moral health

demands. It is especially operative on those who have grown most suddenly rich.

Money-getting is a useful faculty. But we shall see presently that there are many other powerful means contrived to keep down accumulations to the level of public safety. Seldom is it allowed to stagnate. In whatever hands, honest or dishonest, it is kept in useful circulation, and the benefits inure to general prosperity. If the rich man suffers, it is chiefly from self-imposed cares incident to over-riches.

THE PUNISHMENT OF CRIME.

It is to the criminal propensities of man that we owe civilization. Crime first suggests and compels men to organize, that a system of defence may be adopted against this evil. Society is kept in activity by a system of impulses and restraints, checks and counter-checks. Without some equivalent contrivance, the constant motion its health requires could not be maintained. Rogues are a necessary evil of this sort. That they should, however, be permitted to go unchecked in their turn, would be an anomaly in Nature. Besides, an important part of their office would fail of its purpose if their depredations did not rouse us to action.

Society is compelled in self-defence to keep up a continual counter-warfare against them; and their punishment is rendered necessary, not for revenge certainly, but to keep the whole class from exceeding the useful limit of their distributive functions, lest they should

become a greater evil than that which they are designed to prevent.

Every work of Nature oscillates from the strict mathematical centre ; but it has a self-regulating power to correct its aberrations. So in every moral circle, the obliquities are corrected by a power inherent in itself, after the manner described.

PETTY VEXATIONS.

“Life’s smallest miseries are perhaps its worst.

The heart

Consumes with these small sorrows and small shames :

We blush that they exist ; and yet how keen

The pang that they inflict !”

The petty vexations of life, and the ebullition of ill humor they provoke, are of the greatest importance to us. As flies in the sultry summer annoy us, and rouse us from unhealthy indolence, so these little crosses stir up the passions, and save them from extinction. The finest intellect, the strongest mind, that faces unmoved the larger evils of life, is most apt to be taken off its guard by insignificant trifles. These small irritations are evidently required to act with increased frequency and intensity in proportion as the passions are schooled against healthy excitement from larger sources.

The large and vitally important reverses, for which we should be always prepared, are happily so few, that the passions necessary to combat them could not be kept alive if solely dependent for exercise on such occasions. It is therefore obviously necessary that

they be kept in daily drill at home ; just as soldiers in peace keep up the martial spirit by drilling, by petty quarrels, duels, and wrangling brawls. The man whose easy life has not been kept in drill by small misfortunes sinks helpless under the first blast of adversity.

Petty vexations serve another useful purpose in the economy of the mental structure. The mind, like the body, requires the expulsion of the waste made in the production of every act of thought and passion. Continued mental labor, if not relieved by outbursts of passion at trifles, would soon provoke insanity. Hence the proverbial irritability of genius saves it from madness. Where the studios are confined very closely, the difficulty of finding objects to let loose upon drives them into the kitchen, where, by a meddling scrutiny, they can readily find vent for any excess of ill humor. How we fret about "the stupidity of servants"! But how much more should we complain if they were to exchange the stupidity which makes them servants, for wit which might make them our masters!

We should always remember that we pay servants the wages of labor, and not of head-work; and that, in the march of general education under the public school system, we may soon have a worse trouble than stupidity, viz., knowing too much to stoop to our service. This should make us tolerant.

In a Dorsetshire paper we noticed an advertisement for a servant, preference being given to one who could not read nor write.

FAMILY MIFFS.

As Lent is a healthful abstinence, and is followed by joyous Easter, fruitful of feasting and rich interchange of warm greetings ; so is the miff a grand institution for giving needful repose and after-exhilaration to overtaken affection.

After a sulky calm in the height of growing-time, there comes a gush of electricity that gives to vegetable generation stimulus extraordinary and fruitage enlarged. It is probable that in human life it works analogous results. The flood of dammed-up love bursts forth after a miff-time with electric surcharge ; and no doubt there is resultant improvement.

THE CONDITION OF IRELAND.

The condition of the Irish nation presents a study curious and instructive. The question is, What providential purpose is subserved by the peculiar retardation of Ireland in the march of progress ? Excepting Belfast and Limerick, the factory system has not obtained extension in Ireland, and there is a great absence of mines.

These two deficiencies remove the most fruitful sources of immorality and decrepitude. There is scarcely any thing like luxurious living. The simple, pastoral life and food of the people preserve for their children pure

and uncorrupted blood, wild almost as Nature. They multiply amazingly, and this drives them abroad for means of life.

Providence has given the Irish, while in their own country, a peculiar temper, that prevents their organizing under any competent leadership to change their condition. Moderation in council is wanting, and patience of restraint.

There must be a purpose in this destiny.

From the isles of Britain it has pleased the Creator to send forth vast currents of emigration all over the world, displacing inferior races in America, in India, in Africa, in Australia. Everywhere this is going on ; but everywhere abroad the constitution fails in all the descendants of Europe. Irish blood stands it best. In America, the ruddy complexion fades, often in the first generation. Soon the lungs grow delicate, torpor seizes the liver, the bosom flattens, and uterine irregularities accompany. The brain holds its own. In India, the entire white race becomes extinct in the third generation. This is a fact of official record. To hold dominion there, fresh blood must be supplied from Europe after the second generation : in time, the constitution may be changed by continual infusion of new blood, or by other causes. Something like this affects all the fruit-stock that is sent abroad ; and it is found necessary to seek for wild native stock upon which to ingraft the foreign.

If it were designed by Providence to keep Ireland as a nursery of pure and hardy human stock to supply fresh vigor for this recuperation, it would seem that its condition is calculated for the purpose.

Certainly the intermixture of Irish blood is everywhere a physical improvement; and it is also noteworthy that their form of religion tends to preserve its purity.

There is a singular analogy in the guano islands, which supply renovation to distant soils, doing always well abroad; but which at home, from excess of rich stimulus, can make no growth for themselves.

There are signs that indicate a change. Having served the purpose of its lowly condition, it seems to be about being elevated to a higher position among the nations of progress. If Ireland and Germany would promote intermarriage, each would find improvement. This cross is common in America, and the stock is excellent.

INFERIOR RACES. — SLAVERY. — MIGRATION.

Men and animals, like the productions of the soil, are created to suit the various climates of the earth. Where the climate gives support with least application, men are torpid in body and mind. Where men have to use foresight, and battle with natural obstacles of climate and soil, they are provided with superior minds. To each is given, according to his necessities, in fair distribution.

The first-mentioned we call inferior races; the last, superior. For reasons analogous to the physical law of interchanging currents in the air and ocean, there have ever been movements, or currents of migration, among mankind; and, as we find it in the records of geology, races of men and animals become, in time, extinct, and

new races of superior order take their places. In our day, we see the gray rat of Norway making his way over the earth, and exterminating the native blue rats. He has now nearly finished the extinction of the inferior race in California.

The gray squirrel has invaded America, destroying the black variety; and a species of red squirrel assists. The gray house-fly, though smaller, yet more vigorous, is fast ousting the blue-black fly of Australia. The red ant conquers the black. The Indian conquers the buffalo, and the white man has nearly completed the extermination of the red man.

The same thing is going on in the ocean, — the great leviathan is hunted down by the sword-fish and the thresher; and man is hastening his period of extinction. The white man is everywhere performing similar service on the earth. In Australia, and the many islands thereabouts, it is to be seen that bushmen, and kindred races, are doomed to extinction.

Wherever climate will permit the white man to till the soil, and there is antipathy to amalgamation, the native race is doomed.

But there are at this time interesting and instructive examples of a variation in the working of this law of the war of races. The English have possessed themselves of Hindostan, and, under the law, they would finally exterminate the yellow men. But Englishmen die out there after the second generation. Hindoos alone can cultivate the soil: therefore they are retained; for without them the country would be uninhabitable. The Hindoo has qualities fitting him for improvement. By training, he can fall into the march of progress. He

knows the use of arms, he has courage, and, before England invaded, he had civilization, and nice honor, equal to the best Christianity. For example, the Hindoo reverences age so scrupulously, that, even in battle, he will not slay the gray beards. An officer who served long in India informed us, that, before a battle, the English dyed their gray beards red, not to have the unfair advantage. Noble souls on both sides !

The mission of England appears to be, under Providence, the regeneration of the Hindoos, their advancement in the scale to make them a superior race ; the transfusion of Caucasian blood assisting.

The black race in America presents a problem of equal interest. Let us trace the cause of his enslavement in America from a providential point of view. Every evil has its uses, and its compensation of good. Why was the negro enslaved ? That is the question.

When America was first invaded by the British, cotton was a scant and dear product. The world has had its nomadic age, its pastoral age, its iron age, its dark ages, its ages of poetry, of religious wars, of great geographic discoveries, of conquests, &c.

All these rotations were necessary, like rotation of crops and fallow years to the fields. The discovery of America, and the production of cotton in great supply and at low prices, were providential preparations for the new age to come, viz., the age of mechanical invention, and of the substitution of artificial power and ingenious brainwork for the hand-toil of human muscle. It may be called the age of mental supremacy ; for wealth of production cheapens brain-fertilizing food, and gives leisure for mental cultivation. We need not

go into the history of cotton and its wonder-workings to prove that it was the prime mover of all these changes.

The European constitution was at that time, and in that untamed soil, not competent to the culture of cotton. The Indian was not of stuff to bend down to the toil, nor could he be coerced. There was but one race that could do this great work for the purpose of Providence, the negro. But he was by Nature invested with repugnance to toil. The muscle was there ; the climate agreed ; all was right, except his free will and inclination. These opposed : therefore to remove the obstacle, one only way being possible, coercion was used ; and it took the name of slavery.

It served the purpose as no other way could. A milder form of servitude we never saw ; having seen it in a tour of observation undertaken expressly to examine and report, and being made keen by a prime-moving prejudice. Let it be considered that it is not given to Caucasian laborers to get from a golden guinea and freedom a tithe of the enjoyment which we saw everywhere in slavery, distilled from a sixpence by the light-hearted, easy-worked, well fed and cared-for black of the Southern States. Beautifully God tempered his winds to this shorn lamb by giving him a happy disposition, and to his master tenderness of heart.

Exceptional cases have been trumpeted as general ; but it speaks for itself, that, if so ill used, the race could not have so thrived and multiplied. We have noted the treatment of the free blacks in the North, and of the enslaved in the South ; and we speak truth when we say, it is only in the South that the negro ever found

kindly feeling, and toleration of personal presence. There he was always full fed and cared for. He was not an outcast; and, whatever occasional suffering he experienced at the South, it bore no comparison to the privations and abuses, the kicks and the cuffs, and general persecution, he has suffered North.

But now he is free; and it is plain to be seen that his happy days are turned to care. He is expected to be self cared for, to toil voluntarily as a white man must do to live in that climate; and it is to be seen if he can come up to the expectations of the benevolent age that freed him.

India, Egypt, Algeria, and other countries, can now supply the world with cotton; and other fibres are taking its place. Beets are supplanting sugar-cane, and tobacco is grown everywhere. The negro is no longer a necessity. Benevolence has freed the black: but it can't change his nature, nor supply Caucasian brain to his narrow skull; nor yet can it speed his gait to keep up with the white man in his lightning march of progress. Enthusiasm and pride of sentiment may spare him for the present; but the negro is no longer wanted in America: therefore, his mission ended, destiny will enforce his departure or his extinction.

The exodus has begun. The same benevolence that freed him had foresight to see this inevitable result; and, long ago, it founded a new republic for his future home in his own country. The Colonization Society, government assisting, transported in 1867 twelve hundred blacks to Liberia; and thousands are applicants for 1868. There is a general desire to quit the country among the free blacks; and a significant letter is published from one

of its transported people now settled in Africa. The black man says, "I felt my inferiority in the States. I was among a superior race, whom I could not equal nor emulate. I felt ever conscious of this, and I had no heart. Here I find myself inferior to none, and whatever is in me comes out. It is a great thing to feel you are as good as your neighbors."

There is enough of white blood in the returning negroes (and this could only come of immoralities), of seated habits of civilization, and of moral and religious training, to insure a general regeneration and higher advancement of the negro race on that continent. These requisites could not have been attained by other means, so far as we can divine, than the plan Providence has pursued. For these requisites, the black race has paid in its temporary servitude. Slavery has temporarily benefited the white race; and it has sent back to Africa the means of everlasting return in the general advancement of the black race.

Human wisdom, if it will free its judgment from prejudices, cannot fail to see in this circuit the workings of a beautiful law, by which Providence uses a temporary evil to produce a lasting good.

Among the curious devices of Providence to promote migration, the rate of wages becomes conspicuous. It was this that brought from Europe, and still keeps up, a constant current of migration to America and Australia. The same agency is relieving the supernumerous Chinese by a flow of unexampled migration to the British Provinces, to Siam, to Singapore, Manilla, Sandwich Islands, Peru, and California. And negotiations are pending to direct a new current of China laborers to Texas and

Louisiana, which seems prophetic of an approaching exodus of the African race towards the land which best suits its future prosperity.

The importance of this migration will be appreciated when we consider that already there are seventy thousand Chinamen in California. All are industrious workers, and all read and write. There is a very singular peculiarity in this migration, beyond former example. There are scarcely any women, except public characters. This has a meaning which we must study. Black and white have transfused superior blood through the black female only upon a scale of great extent. Should Providence design transfusion of Caucasian blood into the Mongolian race, it must be through a reversal of this order of sexual connection.

The Chinamen we speak of are but common laborers ; but they are quick-witted, and in every way superior to the negro. No people learn mechanical work so easily, for they get the hang of things at once. For good nature, contentment, orderly behavior, sobriety, industry, and economy, they give example worthy of imitation.

The providential uses of their advent begin to appear in a demand from China for various products which their returned countrymen are spreading a taste for. It marks a step of progress. We can do more for China than for Africa, because it has greater capacity for advancement. China is about to enter into the family of nations, and this California migration is evidently assisting. It is its evident purpose.

From Japan, there is to flow a new migration. The first arrivals consist, not of laborers, but of superior

classes, who are in California to learn our language and our civilization, which they quickly acquire.

The Japanese can hardly be spoken of as an inferior race. They are proud, warlike, learned, civilized, and highly skilled in the mechanical and fancy arts and sciences. They are the Yankees of Asia. They invent, and do much thinking. God has given them a religion replete with moral guidance, not inferior to ours. Their commercial probity is superior to ours in this, that failures to meet obligations are quite uncommon.

A peculiar difference is seen between Chinese and Japanese in California. One brooks insult: the other does not. Though much alike in person, the latter adopts our full dress, and so bears himself, that none feel tempted to offer him affront.

If we treat these races as becomes the better religion we profess, we may readily win them to the policy of adopting ours; for the differences are merely dogmatical and very trifling. They are alike Asiatic.

When the purposes of this Asiatic migration are fully revealed, there can be no doubt we shall see another instructive lesson in the law of compensation and self-regulation which we have endeavored to illustrate.

TOBACCO.

“ Yes, social friend, I love thee well,
In learned doctors’ spite :
Thy clouds all other clouds dispel,
And lap me in delight.”

From the earliest records of our race, narcotics, like tobacco, have been in use, — the result of a natural

appetite. China has its opium ; India, the betel-nut and the hemp. Persia, Southern Africa, and Brazil use the hemp also, and so does Egypt, under the name of *hashish*. In Siberia, a species of fungus is used. Cocoa is the sedative of Bolivia and Peru ; and the red thorn-apple, of New Grenada. England, all Europe, all America, and a vast extent of earth besides, have tobacco. It is in vain to cry out against tobacco. Evidently it has its providential purpose, and is indispensable to some needful function in the human economy.

Some philosopher says that women, to whom it is most offensive, derive from it the greatest protection. Many an angry word and violent action are diverted from the wife and children by the soothing action of the pipe.

Its effects must have some analogy to spirits ; and whatever reasons confine its use almost wholly to males are doubtless applicable alike to both.

Dr. Velpeau read (June, 1862) to the Medical Society of Paris a paper from Dr. Deureaux of Puy l'Évêque, on tobacco.

He has been directing inquiry for many years to the purposes which this curious plant subserves in the human system.

He says, that, about twelve years ago, tobacco began to be a general staple of production in his section. It gradually came into use ; and now everybody smokes. The consequences have been marked, in the improved physical condition of the young men, as proved, moreover, by the returns of the Military Commission, which announces the fact from surgical inspection of the recruiting officers.

The doctor respectfully recommends the *encouragement* of the use of tobacco in all the lyceums and colleges of France, because he has satisfactorily established the fact that it greatly checks certain vicious habits, and counteracts their dreadful ravages on the constitution.

This remarkable document was published some months after we had composed our present essay on intoxicating drinks. It gives additional probability to the assumption that our investigations have struck upon the path which leads to the true purposes of all intoxicants, exhilarants, and sedatives ; and it lends a new illustration that all social evils have their protective uses against still greater ones which are generated by the restraints of civilization. The strong appetites and passions, which Providence implanted in us for use, would find dangerous issue when refused their natural outlets, were there no palliatives. Civilization means departure from nature ; and, the more refined it is, the more such evils will call for resignation to a providential necessity, from which there is no escape.

FASHION.

“ And not a vanity is given in vain.”

In the theory of religion, one of the great social evils is fashion. It is decried by the apostle ; and every pulpit has a word against it.

Nevertheless, if we study the uses of fashion, and of its handmaid, vanity, we shall find that their conservative influence upon morals, and their propulsive power

in human progress, make them indispensable agents for good. It will be seen that the comparative evil is trifling, and due only to occasional excess incident to all good institutions ; and that it affords us excellent discipline in a variety of petty vexations and arousing jealousies, that stir up the organ of emulation, to which refined civilization owes more than to any other source.

Of all contrivances to redistribute unhealthy accumulations of wealth, fashion is the most admirable. In proportion as riches gather, so grows the desire to display them. It is thus vanity is set to work levelling down barren mountains of wealth, and turning them into fertile fields of production.

Expunge this evil from the earth, and there would come dire distress, such as never yet frowned upon the children of men.

What would become of the vast looms and other millions of machinery of human industry, the mines which supply motive-power, the thousand and one fine arts that strain invention, the ships of commerce that distribute their fabrics over the world, if fashion were not kept ever busy to sustain them, — ever contriving and demanding changes of style, and finer and finer perfection ?

The moral agency of fashion does more than this for us. When it occupies a lady's mind, be it in her leisure, at her toilet, or on parade, it is an absorbing passion overruling all others ; and she is not at home to the calls of mischief. And, when men are at pains to appear like gentlemen, they incline to behave so as not to betray a deception.

Fashion, unlike wealth, is not a monopoly of the rich.

Among the humblest, it supplies a stimulant to emulation, and an unction to self-esteem. From their restricted resources they manage to spin out as much vanity as the highest. A servant-girl happening to ride in a carriage with her little finery and stock of airs, and a puff of self-esteem which no duchess can emulate, was asked if she enjoyed the ride. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "I should be perfectly happy if I could only be on the sidewalk to see myself go by."

Let no one rail at fashion, but give thanks to the Great Spirit for this beneficent contrivance to accelerate commerce, to divert the children of men, to give them ever-varying employment, to conserve public and private morals, and to give elevation to the general standard of our finer emotions.

Could we as completely trace out every evil, we should be equally convinced that there is not one evil in the world that could be abstracted, without depriving us, as in this case, of an indispensable agent in the production of a wide range of more than counterpoising benefaction.

THEATRES AND ROMANCES.

We class novels with theatric amusements, because they are essentially the same. One is a fiction we read; the other is a fiction dramatized for more impressive effect. Many people consider the theatre a great institution for evil, chiefly because some immoral persons attend, and because the performers are often wild in their lives. In no other public place do we consider such things matters

of consequence. In the church, the hotel, the lecture-room, the public streets, we do not speak of such objections, except where objectionable persons preponderate, or are too conspicuous in their parade. Even then, if they keep their distance, we make no account of it. Of a thousand persons in an average theatre, nine hundred and fifty are respectable : and this should suffice ; for, even in our churches, there is probably an equal proportion of persons who are given to habits of immorality : and all confess in prayer that they are not entitled to throw the first stone at those who frequent the theatre.

The proper inquiry is, Are theatres all evil ? have they any good in them ? does the good overbalance the evil ? Let us see.

It has pleased the Almighty that the Drama should keep pace with the Church, from the beginning even to this day. It is therefore an institution founded and sustained by the same Providence. Like the Church, it successfully diverts men's minds from the cares of life. Regarding the evils which are charged, it may retort upon the Church with force, that religion has been the parent of wickedness more reprehensible. Religious wars, persecutions, dogmatic animosities, hatred and uncharitableness, should make churchmen judge less harshly the lighter evils of the Drama. And it is not unfavorable to the theatre, if it have a fair claim to usefulness, that, while religion has largely resorted to force in every form to compel its acceptance, the Drama has always won its way by its own merits alone.

The Drama is, moreover, like the Church, a moral instructor. No play ever held public favor that does not make virtue triumph over vice ; and, as a matter of

fact, few religious discourses impress this moral so indelibly as a good play. The Drama teaches by parables. A play is a parable enacted. It pleased our Saviour to adopt this system of blending entertainment with instruction ; and its marked success may well be studied by teachers who desire to follow his example.

How beautifully the parables of the stage illustrate the uses of moral evil to keep society in movement, and to call into play the virtues and the highest aspirations of men ! Its aim is always to show that all the machinations of the wicked end in bringing out lasting good from evils that pass away. And ever we learn in the play, that the evil-doer finds corrective retribution in the re-action of wickedness on his own head. Without these avenues of evil leading to earned happiness (true representation of real life), how insipid would be the play ! Life is a stage, and we the players. To make our lives interesting of incident, and profitable for discipline, to keep alive charity and virtue, we need all the trials, wrongs, vexations, and collisions, winding up in earned happiness to the worthy, and reproof of conscience to the unworthy ; and for its impressive illustrations the Drama is inimitable. There should be cordial relations between the Church and the Drama. Each works in its own way to a good end ; and each has its multitudes that profit best by moral impressions conveyed in his own preferred way. Who will not say that moral instruction through a play, a novel, or a parable, is not better than none ?

We believe, if the truth were known, religion gains immeasurably more than it loses by the Drama and the novel. While they lead none from the Church, many

derive from them their first effective admiration of Christian goodness; and they enter the Church under this inspiration in quest of new aliment for the awakened appetite. We are persuaded, that, if the Church were to make friends with the stage, it would correct the evils complained of. Standing at enmity has the bad effect of deserting a field where it might do good. Then, at least, it would find that the stage, so far from being an enemy of the Church, would be its great coadjutor.

“How shall we be amused?” Mrs. Stowe’s views are those of a large majority of Christian people who feel the necessity of a radical change in our amusements. We think the following thoughts are excellent:—

“The whole department of amusements—certainly one of the most important in education—has been, by the Church, made a sort of outlaw’s ground, to be taken possession of and held by all sorts of spiritual ragamuffins; and then the faults and short-comings resulting from this arrangement have been held up and insisted on as reasons why no Christian should ever venture into it. If the Church would set herself to amuse her young folks, instead of discussing doctrines and metaphysical hair-splitting, she would prove herself a true mother, and not a hard-visaged stepdame. Let her keep this department, so powerful, and so difficult to manage, in what are, morally, the strongest hands, instead of giving it up to the weakest. . . .

“Young people do not like amusements any better for the wickedness connected with them. The spectacle of a sweet little child singing hymns and repeating prayers, of a pious old Uncle Tom dying for his religion, has filled theatres night after night, and proved that there really is no need of indecent or improper plays to draw full houses. . . . Why should saloons and bar-rooms be made attractive by fine painting, choice music, flowers, and fountains, and Sunday-school rooms be four bare walls? There are churches whose broad aisles represent ten and twenty millions of dollars, and whose sons and daughters are daily drawn to circuses, operas, and theatres, because they have tastes and feelings (in themselves perfectly laudable and innocent), for the gratification of which no provision is made in any other place.”

The Jesuits are the most successful instructors and proselyters. Their colleges are provided with theatric halls, and the students are the performers. The institution is turned to manifest good purposes. Good principles are pleasantly and permanently impressed. Eloquence is cultivated for the future pulpit. The young mind gets healthy diversion, and the fathers win the affections and the reverence of the young for the religion thus kindly presented. It is an example our Protestants may profit by following.

SLANDER.

There is a lust in man no power can tame,
Of loudly publishing his neighbor's shame.
On eagle's wings immortal scandals fly;
While virtuous actions are oft born to die.

HORACE.

However we may deprecate the evil of slander, it springs from useful exuberance of the organ of self-esteem.

Self-esteem needs to be extra large to sustain in us the dignity which humanity so much wants to preserve us from the degeneracy and debasement incident to the seductive vices of luxurious civilization. Running down hill is so facile, that a greatly disproportioned or exaggerated force is necessary on the up-hill side, to bear against gravitation and momentum.

The organ of self-esteem gets its surplus from the organ of causality, which becomes weakened to that extent. Hence it comes that we imagine (though we may

not confess it) that our neighbor's character and our own are on opposite sides of a scale-beam: if we pull down his, ours goes up by the movement. No greater hallucination ever beclouded reason; yet no cherished dogma is so deeply, ineradicably, and universally rooted in the human brain. And if it be therefore a useful quality, it will show that Providence implants in us curious dogmatic superstitions that are designed to be ineradicable.

It will not be doubted that some correcting influence is necessary to keep in check the errors and obliquities of mankind, — something to give us a hint when we get on the wrong track. No man sees his own obliquities: the halo of self-esteem makes his dark spots invisible.

Then there remains but one way, — every man must perform the office of censor for his neighbor; else, every man minding only his own business, the world would sink into corruption. Crime would find neither detection nor prosecution.

In the streets of Naples you will see rows of women, each hunting game in the other's head.

This is the function of scandal.

If we were to keep in view the unworthy motive that impels us, and the moral disturbance it excites, no man would lend himself to the agency of so odious a task, so loathsome a duty, especially in the higher circles where it is most needed, — of being scandal-monger to his neighbors.

The wisdom of a finished mind is manifest in the singular way by which this seemingly insurmountable difficulty is overcome by Providence. A strong appetite for scandal is interwoven in our very nature. A

delusion is put upon us to believe it profitable. It is over the whole earth a passion and a fashion : and we all engage right heartily in the dirty work. No vulture snuffs the carrion with more gusto than we our neighbor's faults. And where the moral elements are most active, as in religious communities, it receives, as it requires, new impulse. When our religion was Catholic, what shameful enormities disgraced it, because no rival sects existed to breathe scandal, and whisper wholesome reproach !

There is a reciprocity about scandal, a system of free trade and exchange, which renders its distribution more equal than any other evil, and thus deprives it of half its asperity.

“ 'Tis in a circle scandal goes its round :
We give alternate and receive the wound.
Established practice has ordained it thus :
We rail at others ; others rail at us.”

What an ingenious contrivance is scandal to give ebb and flood, and never-ceasing movement, to the moral atmosphere !

How the vigilant eye of our neighbor makes us circumspect ! what guardians of virtue are the fear of scandal, and the terror of public report ! With easy grace would unwatched virtue yield to temptation, and a sorry condition of society would ensue.

So that the evil of scandal is, after all, of small account compared with the good of its conservative guardianship over the general morals of social communities.

Human wisdom can conceive no substitute that would

so perfectly fulfil the necessary conditions as this curious contrivance.

A passion like scandal, sustained and impelled by a power almost equal to the love of gold, needs all the force of reason, charity, and religion to keep it from overrunning the boundaries of its necessity. It would tend to give it some check, if in every house were suspended Shakspeare's touching appeal to the slanderer : —

“ Good name in man or woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse, steals trash : 'tis something, — nothing.
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enricheth him,
And makes me poor indeed.”

When the slanderer assails our ears with gossip, let us bear in mind this reliable maxim, “ Who entertains us with the failings of others will also amuse them with ours.”

And if we may counsel thee, our brother : if thou dost value peace ; if an approving conscience be a thing of value in thine eyes ; if thou wouldst gather friends around thee, and keep them ; if thou wouldst have an angel to guard thee here, and give thee passage hence, — oh ! be thou resolved to follow this heavenly maxim, —

When the character of thy brother is canvassed, if thine hand of charity open not thy mouth, let the finger of silence rest upon thy lips.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD WORD.

Once upon a time, in a democratic country, three friends went out to seek their fortunes. Having no great talents to rely upon, they bethought them of the proverb "In union there is strength." And they agreed, that, upon all occasions, each would speak well of the other.

Arriving at a village where an election was open for treasurer, they began to put in practice their resolution. Party-spirit ran high; and the candidates so vilified each other, that people feared to confide in either.

The three friends mixed with the crowd, and noised about the excellent character of each other; the two younger especially praising the elder. This attracted the attention of a shrewd and influential politician. As often happens, it became necessary to take up some new man that was not objectionable to either party.

And so our friend was brought forward, and proposed. "Oh!" said several voices, "that is the man we have heard well of." Thus he was elected; and his two companions were provided for.

Finding the magic of harmony, and, withal, being charmed with the pleasant feelings that came from always speaking words of kindness, this became the habit of their lives.

And so it came that all men loved them; and they came to be governors of states, and rulers of peoples.

THE LONELY HEART.

One of the most deplorable evils of civilization is the increasing numbers of unmated hearts. We hang on to life even in misery. But small value can be fairly set upon life without companionship of the sexes. Among all of God's creatures, provision seems to be made for companionship of male and female, except in the human family.

There is a very close relationship between the numbers of the two sexes in the human race at birth, indicating the design of companionship. In proportion as high civilization advances, life is more secure; and population would probably increase too fast for the means of employment and support. This is the only reason that presents itself to account for the numbers that suffer desolation of heart from want of life-companionship between the sexes.

We will not speak of the evil that results from the discouragement to marriage, which is so notable in Europe and in the Atlantic States of America. We desire to give our minds to the search for a remedy, if such a thing be within the ingenuity of human conception. One eminent cause of the trouble is that the young men migrate, leaving their sisters behind; hence the number of women exceeds that of the men. But, in the same proportion exactly, men are over-plenty, and women scarce, in all new colonies. In proportion, also, as the value of woman's labor falls where

it is in excess, it rises in new countries, because it is scarce.

Is it not in the power of management to adopt a system of restoration for this disturbed equilibrium? The subject does not appear to have been pressed upon legislation in any country. Some private organizations have made attempts to get respectable women to California and elsewhere. The result has proved the process practicable, though it has not been continued, because of a general levity, and a disposition to make it a mark for wit and ridicule, on the part of the press. The women, also, naturally shrink from appearing to be on a hunt for husbands, which is the view resident women take of the adventure. They treat it as an opposition line. There was not any difficulty about employment for those who cheerfully accepted what there was to do, waiting till better offered. And their advent aroused the attention of the community to the chances offered for selecting a partner, which resulted in many unions on honorable bases. Ridiculed as it was, it shows that it only needs some change in the manner of doing it, to make it available for extended good.

The wit of woman surpasses the wisdom of man. Women (if they would take it in hand) alone are competent to devise a plan of acceptable delicacy to their lone-hearted sisters; and men would be found able and willing to assist the good work. At home, they have a remedy in their own hands; but the instincts from Providence prevent the use of it. The passion for dress, the distaste for household duties, and the cost they put upon their maintenance, seems to be the way of Provi-

dence to keep off the men, and to check over-population. They voluntarily barter their right to marriage for an equivalent gratification in the world of fashion; and, so far as they do this, they have their reward.

WITH EVERY GOOD, THERE IS MORAL EVIL.

We have never read so good a lesson as the following, from Rev. H. Ward Beecher, to illustrate the necessary evils of life, and the folly of searching for good without evil:—

“AN EASY PLACE WANTED.”—BEECHER’S ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

I receive letters of every complexion, but not often more pithy than the following; which I give *verbatim*, except the name:—

LANCASTER, Feb. 5, 1868.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Sir, — I hardly know how to address so great a man. You said in a sermon, some time ago, that honesty ought to be rewarded. I am honest with my fellow-man, myself, my God. Can get recommendations (the best) from lawyers, doctors, preachers, &c. Get me an easy (*sic*) situation; that honesty may be rewarded. C. C.

To which I append my reply.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — The proper way to address a great man is the way in which you would address any man who has good common sense. Never begin by telling him he is a great man. If he is one, he probably found it out before you did; and, if he is not one, you will not be apt to make much by tickling his vanity by so cheap a compliment.

Surely a man as honest as you are has been rewarded already. What! “honest with your fellow-man, yourself, and your God?” There are few men that can say as much. Honest with your fellow-man? Is your conduct without knots, windshakes, or cracks? How long has it been so? Do your neighbors all think so? Have you

come to it gradually, as the winter apple ripens? or has it always been so? Excuse these questions; for, really, I am deeply interested. You belong to an exceedingly small class. You have few fellows on earth. Indeed, when you add that you are honest with yourself, I cannot keep company: you are ahead of me; and when you add that clause — honest with your God — it takes you entirely out of my sight. Why do you come to me? I ought to sit at your feet. You are my master.

No doubt you can get “recommendations from lawyers, doctors, preachers.” You place these gentlemen, doubtless, in the order of their honesty, ending in a climax. Lawyers are proverbially honest; doctors never deceive; preachers always practise what they preach. Recommendations from one of these would smack of self-laudation. Every man praises his own virtues. Get some one not so inevitably good to commend you. Are there no editors, no members of Congress, in your neighborhood?

But now I come to the most important part of your letter, — “Get me an easy situation, that honesty may be rewarded.” I am ready to do all in my power for you. Had you signified the sort of easy place you would prefer, I should have been less perplexed. Let me see.

How would a good farm suit you, with, say, fifty head of neat stock in the barns, twenty horses, one hundred head of hogs, cribs full of corn, and twenty stacks of good timothy hay, besides all that the cattle can eat stowed away in the barn? I propose giving you this; but, just now I am afraid there is some embarrassment in the business. The place is not easy enough. I would not, if I were you, go into manufacturing, nor merchandizing, nor speculation. There is too much agitation just now.

I could send you to Congress; (every thing is easy enough there!) but the singular honesty which you possess would make you lonesome. Congressmen are all, or, most all, honest, but not so honest! and you might find yourself an object of jealousy and envy, which would take from the *ease* of your position, — all the more, because it would bring you so near to the White House.

Now, my dear fellow, that is the very place! Your peculiar virtue of honesty would eminently fit you for that place. The White House has been often refurnished, but never with that which you would carry to it, with one late exception. It took a nation four years to get used to honesty in a president; and then, alas! just as people began to like it, he and it disappeared.

You are a born president! All parties are looking out for you. They want a man “honest to his fellow-man, to himself, and to his

God." What a motto to run a race with ! Thus far, they seem not to have found just the man. If I were to divulge your name, no doubt you would be ravished away to Washington in spite of your screams, and made President of the United States. And the only reason why I do not disclose your whereabouts is, that I fear the presidency would not prove that "easy" place which you so justly think is due to your honesty. In fact, I believe it is a hard place. We read of many patient martyrs. Men have sung in the flames, and been broken on the wheel and rack without a groan, and have worn a heavenly countenance when arrows were piercing them, or stones plumping down upon them. And all these things might be. But shall we ever see a holy martyr whose faith shall sustain him in the presidential chair ? Can a man be tormented by office-seekers, praised by parasites, teased by widows, overrun by Congress, carved and pierced by both parties, flayed by newspapers, cajoled, deceived, and finally tormented by a cabinet who treat him to advice as consolatory as that which Job received by his friends, and yet be a saint ? Can there be peace in the White House ? You are the very man for a president ; but the presidency is not the place for you. It is not "easy."

Perhaps you would like to come to New York, and take Astor's place, or Stewart's. Let me advise you not to do it. They have riches ; but as yet no search has been able to find for them that rare and precious stone, content. Both of them have builded a good deal. But though they can keep out of the weather, the winter's cold, the summer's heat, and exclude light and sound and dust, as yet they have not been able to keep out care, sickness, sorrow, and heartache. No. I cannot conscientiously recommend you to become a very rich man. It is not "easy" to do, and still less "easy" after it is done.

Don't be an editor if you would be "easy." Do not try the law. Avoid school-keeping. Keep out of the pulpit. Let alone all ships, stores, shops, and merchandise. Abhor politics. Keep away from lawyers. Don't practise medicine. Be not a farmer nor a mechanic ; neither a soldier nor a sailor. Don't think. Don't work. None of them are easy. Oh, my honest friend, you are in a very hard world ! I know of but one real "easy" place in it. That place is the grave !

How is it in Lancaster ? Can they not serve you there ? Even graves are very dear about here. Try and get suited at home.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

IMAGINARY EVILS.

“Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows ;
Which show like grief itself, but are not so.”

All experience proves, that, even if there were not exterior evils, the human mind would necessarily produce imaginary evils, for the same reasons that make real evil a necessity, — viz., the collision and wear among the material organs of the brain. It is a merciful Providence that gives us real evils to occupy the mind ; for no real evil can compare in horror with those of insane imaginings, such as come from idle luxury, dyspepsia, and many forms of insanity. The best remedy for the terrible imaginings of the insane is to contrive some serious natural trouble. It acts on the homœopathic principle, that “like cures like ;” and it is a sure relief.

Miss Mary P—— of Pottsville, Penn., a very estimable maiden lady of advanced age, being rich, and having nothing to do, was a prey to imaginary troubles. She lived alone with a servant in a fine mansion, with a large garden, which it was her pride to show to her friends. This was enclosed with board fencing. Besides the general practice of grumbling incident to fancied griefs, the lady would now and then get so unbearable, that her brother, who was a practical philosopher, used to drop a board off the fence, and let the pigs into the garden. The old lady was always relieved by thus substituting a real for her imaginary troubles. After a healthful chase, and expulsion of the pigs, she emerged from her seclusion, made the rounds of every friend she

knew, and did not know ; and with a refreshing power of eloquence, and a flush that made her young again and really interesting, she poured out the tale of the pigs in the garden. The effect of this medicinal treatment lasted a month, during which she could enjoy a joke and a hearty laugh, hitherto denied to her imaginary misery.

Oh ! not in anger, but in mercy, is it ordained that in the sweat of the brow we shall earn our bread. Like other evils, studied out, it is a blessing in disguise.

Ye that press your beds of down,
And sleep not, see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it. 'Tis the primeval curse,
But softened into mercy, made the pledge of
Cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

COWPER.

WANT OF AN OBJECT IN LIFE.

“ Every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redressed.”

There is an increasing number of Christians, of both sexes, that suffer the torments of “nothing to do.” They escape the evils that are inseparable from the collisions of active life ; but, in return, they are punished for inactivity repulsive to Nature, by tenfold greater evils of the imagination, as well as by diseases of torpification, the most miserable of all ailments. Abernethy’s cure is within reach of all : “Live on sixpence a day, and earn it ;” but the patient cannot see it.

A widow lady being left with wealth, but without

family or occupation, found life insupportable. To have something to do, some object to live for, she undertook the care of a poor and afflicted aunt, whose infirmities gave a world of trouble to the task; but the very constancy of the occupation was a relief from the tedium of nothing to do. The widow had to rise early, and attend late; and the sufferings of her aged aunt were ever calling for cogitation. The care was great; but health was its reward.

After the death of the invalid, there came a void, dark and terrible, in the widow's life. The pastor tried to console her by representing the great trouble that was now off her hands, and for which she ought to be thankful. "Oh! I do not think so," said she. "So long as I had aunty to take care of, I had an object to live for; and I knew nothing of the misery I now endure from having nothing to do, nothing to occupy my thought. Aunt may have been great trouble; but my affliction now is far greater. I wish aunt was back again."

Here is a lesson to all idlers. Find some one to relieve, some public charity to interest you, and Heaven will bless you with health and happiness.

INTOXICATION.

Wine is as good as life to a man, if taken moderately. What is life to a man without wine? (See Ecclesiasticus.)

Come, drink the wine I have mixed; drink with a merry heart. (See Proverbs.)

When we find an appetite, or a passion, or an instinct in man, that has been from the beginning, and

that still is, we must accept it as part of his nature. That evil comes from it is no argument against its Providence; for man has no appetite that does not produce evil by over-indulgence. There are other passions that are still more abused than drinking spirits; as eating, and instinct of generation: but the abuse does not blind us to their providential necessity.

Prophets, priests, poets, and philosophers have sung the praises of wine. Our Saviour says John the Baptist was strictly a temperance man, but that he himself was not. He indulged in the exhilaration of wine, and was called a wine-bibber by the censorious. According to the history which St. John records, our Saviour's first miracle was the conversion of water into wine, and its presentation to his friends, when they were already well filled; and one of his last promises was to drink wine with his adherents in heaven. Solomon recommends it for what is in our day one of its apparent purposes, "Give wine to the heavy heart; let him drink, forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." In seeking to trace out the evils of the world, and to show their necessity and their good, as contrasted with their evil effects, this most abstruse law taxes the largest powers of rationality. There are some peculiar exemptions from this instinct, and this fact may give a clew to our investigation.

The taste for stimulating spirits is confined almost entirely to the male sex; and the appetite does not come to that sex till the period of ripening age. It is when other forms of abuse begin to draw on the vitality, that appetite comes, and indulgence in spirits and tobacco. There seems to be some relationship between these two;

and this is confirmed by their attaching themselves to the male sex. This peculiarity is no doubt the key to the mystery. But it is embarrassing, on account of its delicacy, to give its workings the ample tracings necessary to its full comprehension. The labors of civilized life that harden the muscles, stiffen the joints, and give decrepitude to the body, are allotted to the male sex; so is that mental toil that overworks and exhausts the brain: literary genius tends to seek recuperation from exhaustion of the brain by the use of stimulants.

There is a vast consumption of spirits connected with political movements and their festive demonstrations, with war, and other institutions from which women and boys are excluded.

These peculiar safeguards thrown around women and ungrown males seem to indicate that wine's beneficial uses are for the male alone; and probably that hardened muscles and indurated brains receive from wine a needful relaxing for effective transmission. There is dull and care-wearing monotony of too long and unrelieved periods in the occupations of men. The laborer is harnessed to his work; and the man of business as well as of literature has little rest from his brain-work, except in sleep; and often his dreams do but renew his labors and his cares.

It seems not improbable, that, in such cases, Solomon's recipe saves multitudes of these classes from worse evils than it sometimes leads to, — "Let him drink, and remember his misery no more."

Every one knows that devotion to toil of head and hand is against inclination to social intercourse. The fatigues of the day incline to rest. It is equally clear

that wine awakens the mind to recuperated energy, and gives wit and sparkle where all was dull and taciturn. The mean spirit is turned to charity and to deeds of heroism. This may be undervalued because it is the effect of excitement; but what are called religious revivals administer moral stimulation for similar purposes of sudden conversion.

That the use of stimulants must be endured, all legislators seem to agree. Every effort to prohibit their use proves unavailing; but there may be many ways to lessen their abuse if we would wisely study the subject. We may not stop the lightning, which has indispensable uses; but we do contrive to render it as little harmful as possible by giving it safe diversion. This is the way we may mitigate the evils of intemperance. Like all evils, it is probable the good is widespread, and the evils are few in comparison. We are often deceived by the great show and chronicle of evil exhibitions, while we are blind to the good which makes no outward show. The intemperance of lightning (so to say) produces small evil compared to the general and fruitful exhilaration of the electric fluid, which is lightning in moderation. So one intoxicated person makes great display of the evils of spirits, while a thousand persons who in various ways derive benefit from wine and alcohol attract no observation. This reflection raises the suspicion that the comparative good of spirits to the world largely predominates over the evil, as we find it to be in the case of all other evils we have investigated.

REMEDY FOR INTEMPERANCE.

We have examined the evil of intoxicating beverages, that we may get some insight into the mystery of their being here, giving affliction, in order that we may have practical judgment to devise plans to mitigate the evil. The soul of man craves excitement, as the stomach craves appetite to give relish to its food. It is to its capacity for excitement, for elevating itself above normality, that the human mind owes its great superiority. He who has no susceptibility to excitement is as hard to move as a mountain.

Inasmuch as we cannot destroy the love of excitement, and as the stupefying occupations of life will seek relief from it as a necessary recuperation, our task should be not in vain efforts to stifle nature, but, by wise devices, to minister to this acknowledged want of humanity in some form that will be acceptable.

In countries where the vine grows, it is found that wine becomes a general beverage in substitution for spirits. It is less harmful, and more useful. Where malt liquors are largely introduced, they tend in the same direction; viz., to supply excitement with lessened intoxication. Wherever cheap public amusements are offered, we find they are accepted, and, in a great degree, they wean from intoxicating resorts. In the absence of these, and where there is much leisure, on Sunday, for instance, we find that intoxicating beverages obtain larger demand. From these facts, let us gather suggestions.

The nations of the earth, with great accord, akin to instinct, have one day in the week to rest from labor. Of this day a part is given to public devotion, and a part to recreation, social interchange, and public amusements. In England only, and in America, to which she gave her institutions, is the day confined by law, as far as possible, to rest alone; excluding recreation and all public amusements. It is to be seen by comparisons which system best subserves morality and temperance. It is precisely in these latter countries where intoxication prevails the most.

The interest of religion is supposed to be promoted by these restrictive laws; but the power of the Church over the conscience is not equal to that of the States of Europe where no such coercion is practised. We who seek pretext for austerity in the sabbath of Moses may, if we find it unprofitable, easily prove that there is no connection between our Sunday institution and that of Moses; which Christianity rejected, and, to make rejection certain, chose a different day for our rest. At least all Christendom, except the two nations mentioned, so regard it.

The Parisians are the most cheerful and social people in Christendom. The Sunday institution does a great deal to make them so. The shops of Paris are closed on Sunday by common desire, and without restriction of law, or pressure of organized effort. No churches in Christendom are more crowded on that day. The Church has till noontime to do its work; and, if it do it well, the time is ample. At that hour, by concert between the church and government, all church doors are closed for the day; and the priests and the people

go forth together for recreation. In a spirit of fervid devotion, a reverential awe, such as is not apparent in our churches, the people, having heard counsel from above, go forth to practise what has been inspired, viz., kindly sociality between neighbors, and general courtesy.

The Congress of Workingmen, Frankfort, 1863, resolved "to cultivate those higher tastes and amusements which repress all habits of debauchery."

In Paris, it is the careful duty of the government to invite all the world to recreation on Sunday. Innocent excitement and amusement are provided in such varied abundance, that every one is filled. Beautiful promenades, zoölogical gardens, menageries, ornamental parks, galleries of pictures, statuary, and other exhibitions, are thrown open free of charge of admission. Music enlivens the air. A thousand cheap and varied entertainments invite the imprisoned laborer to come forth and taste the innocent divertisement his nature craves. All the world is drawn forth by the irresistible attraction. A general spirit of joy and of neighborly affection is kindled in every bosom. The malice our gloomy ascetic carries in his heart into the next week melts away when parties meet in this happy mood. Everybody is sober; nobody can afford to lose the enjoyment by being inebriated. When thus kept, it is a day when one is inspired to ask and to tender forgiveness.

If word of mine
Have harmed thee, rashly spoken, let the winds
Bear all remembrance of it swift away.

Do even as thou wilt, that this dispute
Live not between us, a consuming fire
Forever!

HOMER.

It is a day to extend communion between man and man ; to promote virtuous union between the sexes ; to inspire affection, and ripen love. It is a day that drives dull care away, and gives sorrow to oblivion. It is a day to rejoice in the gift of life. It is a time to awaken man to the contemplation of his Creator's works, and to kindle in his soul a lively sense of the indulgent kindness of Heaven. To the young that joyous day opens a paradise. Earth becomes a sunny heaven : the very atmosphere breathes love, and is redolent of sweet odors.

Move among the crowded multitudes, that thus, light of heart, orderly and gracefully trip in innocence and harmony under the smiles of Heaven, and you may see, that, where wise men legislate, the curse of intoxicating debauchery, born of fanatical bigotry, finds no place in the dark catalogue of social evils. Is it not a superstition without fair foundation, that God is pleased with the sacrifice of our little pleasures, the refusal of his proffered blessings ? It is, perhaps, wiser to believe, that, when Heaven offers gifts, it is religion to enjoy them, distrust and ingratitude to refuse them. What is wanted, is, as in France, to get the Church to see that it is the interest of religion to consider the people's equal necessity for recreation as for devotional exercises on Sunday ; to be convinced of two things, — viz., that one service is better than two to do the allotted work of the Church in a day, if it be well done ; that recreation which is not vicious would repress intoxication that goes against the Church, and promote social intercourse, which helps to bring people into religious organizations, and gives them taste for moral instruction. The

ministers of religion equally require recreation, and opportunity to mingle with the people when in their most courteous mood for profiting by words of softened gravity, aptly spoken as social converse offers occasion.

There may be other ways of weaning men from intemperance. This way has the advantage of proved success. We are quite sure that we shall not be relieved (as we may be) from the excesses of intemperance, till we give it some such diversion as we have indicated.

IS DRUNKENNESS A DISEASE?

From the insane persistence of drunkards, and the known power of habit over the faculties, medical men have been inclined to consider habitual drunkenness a disease. Hospitals for inebriates are institutions growing up under this conviction. Dr. Parish of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in a lecture on habit and its laws, made some remarks worthy of consideration.

The doctor maintained that drunkenness is a disease, and that its victims can no more help it than they can help an attack of the cholera, yellow-fever, or consumption. This disease may be hereditary ; may be planted by the mother in administering remedies to her infant, &c.

A great error of the day is the manner in which the disease of intemperance is treated.

It has become the very bad habit to denounce it as a crime, to rate it among the vices ; and, consequently, its unfortunate victims are cut off from the care and sympathy they deserve and stand so much in need of,

and are looked on only as meriting punishment for their crime. This is all wrong. When the great public, when temperance-reformers, look upon drunkenness in its proper light; when the same provision is made for its thirty thousand victims in Pennsylvania that is made for the blind, the crazy, or the poor; when the drunkard is taken by the hand, encouraged, sympathized with, and made to feel that he is suffering with a disease, and is not a criminal in the eyes of the moral world, an important step will be taken in the true pathway to temperance reform.

WAR.

“Warriors all !

The word is vengeance ! Death’s coal-black pall

Be now our standard ! Be our torch the glare

Of cities fired ; our fifes, the shrieks that fill the air !”

Man is one of the links in the chain of life, which embraces all animals : he is necessarily amenable to the general law to which all animals, his co-tenants of the earth, are subject. Warfare is an instinct that belongs to the primary organizations of all animals. A very large proportion of all animals, birds; insects, and all fishes, get their living by it. Deprived of this destructive faculty, nine-tenths of all life would perish on the earth. As the world is constituted, death is a necessary means of life ; and, by analogy, it may appear that war is equally a necessity to the life of nations. When the baby is yet under the sole guidance of Providence, ere instinct has ripened into reason, it fights for the breast :

even before its hands can be used, it fights lustily with its tongue ; it screams its belligerence.

Combativeness in animals is an instinct ever active when its exciting cause is not hunger, but when, as in man, it comes from other motives. The working-bees and the drones, the red ants and the black, dog against dog, the sword-fish and the whale, are examples.

From the bountiful provision for multiplying life, the earth would soon be overcrowded beyond the means of sustenance, were all men and animals permitted to live until mature age. Of all forms of death, starvation is the most terrible ; and war is the only form in which it is made attractive. For this needful pruning, the Great Spirit sends us disease, pestilence, and famine, in which the fight is all one-sided : men and animals are slaughtered by a power invisible, against which there is no resistance. War is providential pestilence, every way more acceptable. It is a fair fight : men are on their feet. It is a game of equal stratagem, and something like equal forces. Patriotism, military fervor, glory, and promotion animate and sustain the combatants. Like all games of hazard, the excitement becomes pleasant. The soldier complains of idly marching around, and prays for another battle and carnage. Glory may be what some say, "dying for your country, and having your name spelt wrong in the newspapers ;" and wounds may pain : but glory is a talisman of mighty power, and wounds are the warrior's glory, and his pride in all after-life.

If we reconcile ourselves to the necessity of death as an institution inherent in the animal organization, we must look upon war as one of its instruments, by no

means the most objectionable, if it be not, in fact, the most merciful.

“How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country’s wishes blest!”

Nations, like men, are born to die. In their youth, they conquer room for expanding life by wars of aggression. The earth is all under claim; and, if the young nation is to expand in growing, it must displace some potentate to get the necessary room. The history of Israel proclaims that this process was directly commanded by God himself; but its necessity, under the instinct of self-preservation, is shown in the exodus from Great Britain, and her wars against far-away aboriginal tribes: she was compelled to displace to make room for her own over-production of population. Nations, like the men who are their elemental atoms, must keep on growing. The day they stop, they begin to go downward; accumulated success brings organic abuses, fat, internal diseases, intoxication of power, and consumption; vagabonds multiply like boils and cancers, sapping the health of the body natural, and threatening revolution. It is well-established history, that many of the most destructive wars have had their origin in national necessity. To give diversion to internal discontent, to thin out vagabonds and agitators, a foreign war is undertaken, and the nation is saved from internal disruption. When the time has come, that, in the natural order of rotation, the nation must go into dissolution, Providence sends down upon it some new power, which, in turn, demands room for life; and war again is the only means, alike of death to remove the old, and of birth to make

way for the new, nation. This has been, is now, and ever will be, the rotation of life among nations as among individuals.

War, therefore, is a necessary institution, and we must reconcile ourselves to its appointment.

MURDER.

Murder is the offspring of war. War is murder on a large scale. If the larger evil be a necessity, the lesser form of that evil, is, of consequence, the same. The spirit that moves men to murderous encounter in public war could not exist and be kept alive, without, at times, being exercised, by extremes of provocation, on private account. Happily, private murder is the rarest of all crimes; and it may be considered in the light of such casual aberration from a straight line as makes the exception of all general rules. We have reason to be thankful for the proof its rarity gives, that the worst form of crime bears so small proportion in the catalogue of the evils that afflict humanity.

PART THIRD.

RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF GOOD AND EVIL.

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RELIGION A HUMAN NECESSITY.

RELIGION is an inborn instinct of the mind for its own preservation. If there be any thing which persistent existence from the earliest records proves to be a necessity to mankind it is religion. Every people, however rude and ignorant in general, has been supplied with this element ; and what is greatly in proof that it comes from one general, and not from special revelations, is that each and every religion has precisely the same elements. The moral maxims are in nearly identical words in all religions ; the aim and purpose are alike. The purposes may be briefly stated, viz.: —

1st, “ To sanctify some legend about the origin of man on the earth, that a question which puts a dangerous strain on the mind shall be put out of the way.”

2d, “ That the nature of Deity, still more beyond the reach of man’s mental capacity, shall be represented after a fashion that will be accepted, and bring rest on that subject.”

3d, “ That there shall be some power to which men bow submissive, and feel some accountability.”

4th, “ That they shall believe in the dispensation of rewards for good, and punishments for evil.”

5th, "That there shall be a law of morality which men will believe was specially given only for their privileged use ; all others being impostures."

6th, "That this moral law shall have, in proof of its heavenly origin, miracles said to have been expressly done for this people and this religion ; and that all miracles claimed for all other religions are sacrilegious, and without truth."

7th, "That there shall be prophets, who foretell what is to come with such general and indefinite expression as to admit easy adaptation and fulfillment."

8th, "That the elements of every religion shall be so arranged as to conform to the physical law of constant variation and movement among its particles ; that religion shall be capable of great versatility of interpretation, so as to divide men into contending sects ; and, when one set of dogmas wears out the general interest, a new sect can be derived from ingenuity of interpretation, and new interest and re-animated discussion can be aroused."

9th, "That, when this resource fails, interest flags, people grow indifferent ; the instinct of religion craves new aliment, a reformer rises, and a new religion supervenes."

10th, "One of the laws most strongly marked as stringently exercised by all religions is intolerance of investigation. Christianity is not an exception. Of a hundred publishing-houses, ninety-five will refuse to print any investigation of our dogmas, lest they lose the profitable custom of the Church. If our church really believes our dogmas to be pure gold, as distinguished from heathen dogmas, which are but brass burnished

into sham lustre, it should be her pride to invite the test of *aqua regia* from all investigation. But the Church of Christ, unlike its founder, trembles, as do all other religions, at the mention of investigation. The Church should not complain if this mistrust breed widespread infidelity, and if this universal unbelief bring about the consequences of the ninth law aforesaid.

Here are the leading laws of the constituent elements of religion, as we find it among all the nations of the earth.

11th, There is another law, "That what is best administered is best." All having the same moral law, in various dressing of comparatively immaterial narrative, so to say, any one, and all alike, would furnish to the pulpit of any or every other equal moral value and general application if the preacher would dress it to the taste or digestion of the congregation.

Whether we quote from Moses and the prophets, Confucius and his commentators, Brahma and his apostles, Buddha and his Puranas, the Bible of Zoroaster, the papyri of Egypt, the sages of Greece and Rome innumerable, the Gospels of Jesus, the Koran of Moham-med, the Book of Mormon, even the plays of Shakespeare, and a thousand romances we can pick from the shelves (so plentifully has God scattered his moral seed over the world), give but fair interpretation, and power of eloquence, and there will be found in all direct and derived instruction to lead man through paths of holiness to the gate of heaven, and to the bosom of the impartial Father, who gives to all his children equal access to his heavenly presence.

PROVIDENCE IN ALL RELIGIONS.

“ The religion of Nature is everywhere the same. The same moral light is diffused among all peoples. The moral law is therefore the same everywhere, and must continue unaltered in all time. The virtuous obey it in all countries, and the vicious disobey it. It is the law of one common God enacted for all his children.” — CICERO DE REPUB., B. 3 ; EX LACTANT, lib. 6, ch. 8.

We are taught by Christian instruction two things as of essential faith : —

1st, That our religion alone was revealed of Heaven, and that all others make false pretension to revelation, and are in fact false.

2d, That the religion of Moses was once alone true, as is ours now ; but that, while it answered for the people of that age, the progress of the world eighteen hundred years ago found it no longer suited to the improved intelligence of the new era ; on which account a new religion was given to mankind in substitution of the old. We are desired to believe that this reason for a new religion is applicable only to this single case, and to that particular period ; and not that it exemplifies a general law of growth, decay, and change in all religions, so long as similar causes perform the same circuits of change.

In the creation of man, Providence has supplied every provision for the natural wants of every people in the various climates. These provisions differ in form ; but they all contain, and yield by digestion, exactly the same elements, in varying proportion, as best suited to the nourishment of the body wherever it has its home, —

oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, lime, phosphorus, sulphur, &c. It could not be otherwise ; for the purpose is for all mankind alike, — to supply blood, flesh, bones, brain, and so forth. Some form of government, having also a common purpose, has been put into their heads ; certain laws for adjudicating disputes ; certain rules of etiquette to govern the intercourse between the court and the people, and for the conservation of propriety in social intercourse : in short, every want of man as a social being, however rude his condition, is manifestly provided for. Shall we say there is an exception to this law ? that while we confess religion is requisite, and we find that they all have it provided, it is not of God, but of — whom ?

It endangers our own valuation to say it is their own unrevealed invention ; for, as we have said (and we propose to adduce exact proofs), there is not one moral of our religion that is not in theirs : and we scarcely care to match their common sense against our miraculous revelation.

If religion be a necessity of human life, it must be supplied as well as other necessities, or it would conflict with all ideas of an impartial Providence. As this dogma of the necessity of making all other religions false that ours may be true is productive of much uncharity, and is a serious obstacle to Christian unity, and to our success in converting the heathen (as we call them) to our formalities, it commends itself to the review of every pious mind.

Is it not an over-zealous and over-jealous estimate of our own religion that makes us vilify our neighbor's ? Is it not the same false reasoning that sustains private

scandal, viz., that, in proportion as we blacken our neighbors, we bleach ourselves? Let him who would win the esteem of men, and gain open ears for his words, speak only the good he knows, and he will always find good in every thing to fill the measure of his speech. So, let him who would win a hearing for his religion, generously, kindly, and wisely admit the excellences he can not fail to find in everybody's religion if he seeks for them. He will find that men catch the mood of loveliness more quickly than its opposite; and that if he can show them something superior, either in doctrines or in social polity, they will be in the best temper to accept the conversion.

SECTARIAN DISSENSIONS.

Under the law which requires collision to sustain life and movement, religion is provided with disturbing agitators, in the form of sectarian controversies. The day we all agree, religion, no longer fanned, will cease to give flame, enthusiasm will die out, and indifference will destroy its power of doing good. In exhaustless elements of dogmatic change, to keep creating variations of doctrine necessary to its continued vitality, Christianity is not behind other religions claiming special revelation. The body of Jesus was scarce cold before this inherent principle was manifest. Thomas was not the only doubter. Peter was for the old law, and Paul was against him. Barnabas quarreled with Paul about doctrine. Paul had no confidence in, and no companionship with, the apostles who were appointed by

Jesus himself. Christianity was, at the very start, thus broken up into sectarian subdivisions. It is the popular belief that all their doings were under inspiration of God. This implies a confession that sectarian controversy was a contrivance for a good purpose.

Certainly it proves that dogmas may come and go, and be quarreled about with asperity, and the religion itself live and prevail, with a fair assumption that its progress was stimulated by this means, as the best for the purpose. A passing horse gives speed to the cavalcade. It may be, and probably it is, for the purpose of making dogmatic inventions easy, that the gospel of Christianity is given to us by four historians, with incidental variations, instead of in one concentrated and fixed authority, which might have been a bar to useful contention.

INDIFFERENCE AND INFIDELITY.

We accept sectarian divisions as wholesome promoters of activity in all religions, and of safeguards against corruption and tyranny; but we also recognize the necessity for some check upon its tendency to break up religious communities into subdivisions, so numerous, that sufficient talent can not be afforded, and that the funds necessary to other attractions are too much diffused when concentration is imperative. In recognizing the necessity of religion as a bond of union in society, conserving its morals, and preserving it from the many influences that tend to weaken its ties, we also discern that this power would be increased by

greater concentration and harmony than prevail in Protestant Christianity.

That the Church is much in need of such concentration of power at this time is what we propose to show. The great and growing prevalence of infidelity is not its worst enemy. Indifference is still more hostile to its interest. Infidelity listens and argues, while indifference shuts its ears, and turns its back. When infidelity is active, it gives life to religion ; indifference brings torpor and death. To find remedies for evils, we must study the causes that produce them. Nothing promotes infidelity so much as imposing upon credulity beyond endurance : the less of dogmatic religion we insist upon, the fewer will be the unbelievers. Can we reduce the number of insisted dogmas without taking any thing from essential Christianity ? Is it a right or a duty to disturb ancient landmarks, if they become stumbling-blocks, and if they no longer serve any useful purpose ? Can we suggest any means that will give to the Church new power to respond to the calls of this age of great exaction ?

RELIGIOUS DOGMAS.

Dogmas are the menstruum through which the essential morals of religion obtain diffusion, as the atmosphere is the means of diffusing the light and heat of the sun. The atmosphere has its variations ; but sunshine is ever the same. So the dogmas vary with the age, without changing the great moral light of Christendom. All dogmas are of human contrivance.

What is a dogma? It means a learned improvement on the obscurity of Scripture. It is expressly something that is not revealed by those who were instructed by inspiration of God. It is supplemental revelation by inspiration of theological subtlety. The Trinity is, for example, a human invention of a score of very ancient heathen theologies. Athanasius, an ingenious divine, three hundred years after the death of Jesus, conceived the heathen idea to be likewise deducible from expressions culled from our Scriptures. After long and bitter contention, its advocates succeeded in getting it placed, by a council of the Church, on a par with divine revelation. If, at that period of general ignorance, a new dogma of this importance could properly be added to Christianity, why is it improper that we also, in the superior light of this age, may not search for new interpretations? No doubt all dogmas that offend reason and provoke unbelief in this age of light and general education were suited to the believing capacity of their time: all the more should we feel it incumbent upon us, after the example set, to look for ourselves with the greater light given us, and the more exacting believing capacity of the age. Dogmas are alike useful, whether true or not, if people believe them. But, when the intelligence of the age is offended by any dogma, it is a hint from Providence that it needs reviewing; for it fails of its purpose, and is instead an obstacle in the path of religious propagation. Dogmas are made for religion; not religion for the dogmas. The general teachings of the Gospels, their moral instructions, all that is consequential to virtue, are plainly enough expressed; and Christians are not divided

in respect to them. What we differ about would be no loss to personal Christianity if it were all blotted out to be heard of no more. Men could and would be quite as good without the dogmas of any church, without the ceremonies, and without the institution of preaching, if they would, of their own accord, give their minds to the study, and their hearts to the practice, of Christian precepts ; which may be all contained in a single page of an ordinary book.

But, absorbed in worldly affairs, it is not in man to do this : therefore, religion necessarily takes the form of an organized institution, whose business it is to wrap up the terse maxims of religion in such dogmatic formularies, ceremonials, and church-rules of discipline, as shall invest them with an interest, and a power of active diffusion, which, without these aids, would be simple philosophy, to be admired when rehearsed ; and that is all. The light and heat of the sun would be nothing to this world if it were not for the atmosphere, with its warring clouds, which give them modification and diffusion adapted to our vision, and to the geographical peculiarities of the various parts of the earth. That any one set of dogmas, and any single form of organization, could be contrived to suit the wise differences of mental organization among men, is not to be expected. It is wisely ordained, that, by dividing us into many sectaries, mutual watchfulness may guard us from corruption.

This vigilance occasions angry contentions ; but it is a small evil set against a greater. By the rivalry engendered, the religious spirit is kept active ; and as each and all of the sectaries have the same essential

truths of Christianity mantled in the various forms of drapery, about the fashion of which only each stoutly contends for preference, the cause of religion is in every way served to the greatest advantage.

Protestants and Catholics mutually see each the corruptions and absurdities of the other ; and this kind office every religious sectary does for the rest, — it sees every one's errors but its own. So we see the weak points of Mohammedans, Parsees, Buddhists, and Confucians, and they return complimentary raillery at ours. It is only the impartial eye of devotional philosophy that sees in all defects of kindred varieties, and in each and all much larger counterbalance of good.

THE NEWSPAPER.

No power of modern times can compare with the daily newspaper, the weeklies, and the monthlies, for directing and molding public sentiment. As education becomes general, these instructors multiply, and their scope enlarges. Evils also multiply with the sharpening of wit and its competitive consequences. Means of repression by ordinary ecclesiastic methods seem quite inadequate, since there are newspapers of particular kind devoted to making crime heroic and popular by attractive style and pictorial illustration. The circulation of such incentives to evil is immense, and the eagerness to read them is extraordinary. This growing tendency is seen in the popular value given to spicy articles in all our secular newspapers, investing vicious recitals with a

relish. Shall we erect no counter bar to this tendency adequate to correct it, or to repress the fearful increase of vice that it engenders ?

It is eminently the duty of the Church to stem this torrent by new construction, and new motive-power and means of application. If means devised in olden time, and competent then, are now unquestionably inadequate, can we safely incline to adopt new methods ? Is it any disrespect to the devices which they of former ages found suitable to the wants of their time, to shape them for the altered necessities of a new and advanced age ? Rather do we show respect, when we do as they did in suiting means to their existing wants. Certainly we show more faith and more appreciation of our religion, when we find it is an everlasting fountain, from which every age and every people, by seeking, may be sure to find fresh revelation and effective guidance suited to every age as it advances in progression ; so that our religion grows never out of use, but ever increases in new usefulness, in proof of its divine origin.

If we neglect to do this, the instinct of self-preservation urged by the inspiration of universal education, and by daily appeals through the press, will compel men, after the fashion of temperance societies, to seek for more practical remedies ; and this always acts as a defection from the Church, which is to be deplored.

THE INSTINCT OF PROGRESS.

Is it the interest of the Church to lag behind in the great progressive movement of the age? Veneration for ancient authorities grows weaker: in every department, the call is for investigation and modern proof. In mechanics, in science, in philosophy, in commerce of nations, in the constitutions of governments, none is content with the things that satisfied our forefathers. For what purpose has education been universally diffused, and a higher order of intelligence inaugurated? Can it be conceived that the superior minds of this age of light will wade backwards to the dark ages, and take their inferior light for guidance, exchange our jets of gas for their lamps of oil, our locomotive engines for their pack-panniers! Is it to be supposed that our religion can be allowed to stay anchored to dogmas engendered mostly by cloistered anchorites and metaphysical abstractions of dark and gloomy minds? We are not suggesting departure from the words of our Saviour; but a review of inferential dogmas, which, under the superior light God has given us, may, with his inspiration, reveal to us new interpretations more acceptable to the rationality of the age. It may give us new centers of concentration; something that will obtain more general belief, and quicken the activity of religious movement responsively to the march of general progress, and win men alike from indifference and infidelity. These are prominent evils of the times: our task is to offer suggestions for their abatement; and it is in hum-

ble deference we make them. The evils we here speak of are properly within the province of the Church ; but we are quite aware of the objections it will offer. Where it sees danger, we see safety and needful regeneration.

THE PULPIT.

Is the pulpit keeping pace with the progress of all other institutions ? Excessive production and close competition, the expense of commercial adventure, and the great engrossment of men in all their several pursuits, make them exacting towards every thing that asks withdrawal of attention from business.

Education makes critics. To be effective as a preacher of the gospel, it is almost imperative that the pulpit be not inferior to the audience. If it be superior, its power of doing good is heightened. The popular preacher is he who appeals with force to the hearts of men ; who addresses himself to the daily life of his hearers, and gives them practical counsel in that direction. Dogmatic preaching or explanation of texts falls on dull ears. Reading cold, unimpassioned essays is not the preaching that touches the chords of sympathy. Conceive a suitor *reading* off his love, however he may feign devotion, and you have a fair comparison between reading an appeal to a Christian, and making it with all the magnetism of the fervid inspiration of new-born words and living gestures.

We know it is untasteful to refer back to Scripture either our dogmas or our rooted convictions of whatever

kind ; but, if the example of Jesus and his apostles be of any value as exemplars of what preaching ought to be, it may be asked, Why drop the better for the worse method ? If the lecture-system better serves to awaken religious impression, it is right ; but, if Christianity suffers torpor and retardation by the substitution, it cannot be defended, neither by reference to Scripture, nor to the cause of Christianity, nor to the duty we owe to God and man to use the best means and the highest power for the promotion of effective religion.

HOW TO FILL OUR CHURCHES.

Poets come from birth, not from education ; so do preachers. It is idle to put upon the people the sin of empty pews and tardy contribution, and to make hard Sunday-laws to drive them into church. Bless the Lord, and pardon the unjust aspersion ! The people are always good enough to crowd every church in Christendom with eager steps, if the Church would do its part fairly before God. Does Mr. Spurgeon complain ? Does Mr. Beecher upbraid ? Did Wesley or Starr King have cause to charge the people with not coming to hear the word of God ? Never ! And why ? Because they were made preachers of the Word by inspiration of God, and were not dependent on the education of theologies.

To meet the educated masses that are expected to face the pulpit in the generation now ripening, some changes are called for in preparing the coming preach-

ers for the pulpit, or the pews will be emptier than before. Providence provides in abundance both genius and elocution. To the seminaries of theology is confided the selection : if they falsely choose, the sin of empty benches lies at their own door and that of the church that creates them. Desire of parents to have a son in the ministry should be of no account. Inborn qualifications should alone decide the question ; and, if the urgent need of natural talent to attract the educated masses be admitted, this counsel will be heeded. It is, moreover, desirable that the coming preacher shall speak *extempore*. He must be well instructed in science, that he may enrich and impress his sermon by apt illustration ; and he should be well exercised in the use of parables, of which, in the light literature of the day, there is a rich and varied supply. This was the Saviour's system : the closer we follow it, the greater will be our success. Here is a remedy which can not fail to cure the evil of religious indifference.

A man may think he is called by God to preach ; but, if the people have not a corresponding call to hear him, his claim should be negatived. Compulsory Sabbath-laws are tariffs to protect poor preaching. Were liberty not infringed, and were people left free to go to church or to play, the Church would be compelled to employ higher talent. This would, by its own attraction, crowd the churches, awaken religious interest, and advance the now dormant progress of Christianity.

SIN.

Sin is intentional evil. If evil be a necessary law to the evolvment of good, sin, which is but a classification of the principle, must be an institution we can not destroy. What we have to study is the best means of keeping it in bounds. The instinct of self-defense compels us to resist it all we can. This resistance constitutes our life, and calls into activity all the highest exercise of virtue and discipline.

To deal wisely with sin, we must study well its characteristics. If there must be sin, there must be men to do it, and influences to impel to it. We shall learn charity toward criminals if we trace out the many influences that impel them. It needs much study of the providence of evil as a law, to give us reasonable judgment on the popular doctrines regarding the retribution of sin hereafter.

From the unsophisticated speech of the unlearned we often derive puzzling thoughts, and hints profitable for reflection.

An old colored woman was smoking a pipe when she was accosted by Deacon Goodrich, "Aunty, do you think you are a Christian?"

"Yes, Brudder Goodrich, I speck I am."

"Aunty, do you believe in the Bible?"

"Yes, brudder, I bleeve the Scripters; though I can't read 'em, as you can."

"Aunty, do you know there is a passage in the Scriptures which declares that nothing unclean shall inherit the kingdom of heaven?"

“ Yes, Brudder Goodrich, I have heard tell of it.”

“ Aunty, do you believe it ? ”

“ Yes, Brudder Goodrich, I bleeve it.”

“ Well, Aunty, you smoke ; and you can not enter the kingdom of heaven, because there is nothing so unclean as the breath of a smoker. What do you say to that ? ”

“ Why, Brudder Goodrich, I speck to leave my breff behind me when I go to heaven.”

SINFUL INFLUENCES, CONGENITAL AND NATIONAL.

“ There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will.”

In general terms, we say that every man is alike free to do good or evil, and all are equally responsible ; but, when we look into the multitudinous causes which control our actions, we are inclined to make kindly exceptions and allowances.

We find certain proclivities born in men, and we trace them from generation to generation in the same family. We speak of the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs, for instance, as stereotyped characters for a long line of successive descendants. We say we do not like such and such a family : it is bad stock. “ Once a rogue, always a rogue,” is another intimation of this kind. So much like mere machines, set to go only one possible way, do detectives look upon rogues, that, when a robbery occurs, they at once suspect certain fellows whose

set way is indicated by the style of the robbery. And just as rats are born with instinct for getting into our cheeseboxes, so thieves and other marauders form certain groups to which nearly all these offenses are confined; and they are as unchangeably fixed in this course as marauding rats.

Gov. Kennedy of West Australia reports (1862), as the result of six years' experience with convicts, that rascality is evidently an innate disease, exactly as any congenital disease of the body. He looks upon all theories for moral cure as illusory; and he confines himself to studying means of lessening their evil impulses. The most effectual he finds in restricted diet.

The tender part of all bad fellows is the stomach. They always have keen and hungry maws. Vegetable diet, not in full response to their demands, he has proved to have great submissive influence, and to leave them less stomach for a wicked undertaking.

An eminent English magistrate remarks, that, in examining the criminal records of the police of London, he was struck with the persistent recurrence of the same names, and often connected with crimes of the same character, from generation to generation, from periods very remote; as if the poor fellows were born to be criminals. One cannot contemplate those testimonies without inclining to suspect that much crime comes from congenital misorganization of the brain that rules the moral faculties.

National characteristics show us how all men are irrevocably bound down by certain peculiar moral forces, which give fixed character to individuals, quite beyond their control. The levity of the French, the treachery

of the Spaniard, the vindictiveness of the Italian, the sharp-trading of the Yankee and the Yorkshireman, the obstinacy of the Scotch, &c., are proverbial; by which we infer that there are certain organizations necessarily peculiar to each country and climate, which rule the individuals, so far, at least, that each is constrained to act so that the acts of the people, looked at as a whole, shall present the summary of the national character. That is, if you choose, the individual is furnished with certain peculiarities of disposition, and is surrounded by such controlling circumstances, that he is necessarily pleased to do thus and so.

Pickpockets abound in London and New York, but are unknown in Paris and San Francisco, where circumstances do not favor that species of industry. Nationality and sexuality determine in a great measure the tendency to suicide, and to the manner of it, — by drowning, by pistol, by knife, by poison, by noxious gas, or by precipitation from a high tower, which is a Parisian fashion.

In any given case, we say an Englishman would do thus, a Frenchman so, an American this way, a Spaniard that way. We prefer German to Irish servants, &c.; meaning that there is in every people certain fixed and compulsory proclivities, by which their actions can be foreknown. In fact, the world universally treats man's mind as a machine whose excellence is proved by its mechanical inflexibility. We require of a man that he shall never change his views. If he does, he is inconsistent, unreliable. Were there not that fixity which mechanical structure gives to the brain, there would be no reliability between man and man, between one nation and another.

It becomes a necessity of social organization that men shall have fixed characteristics. That these characteristics differ in men according to the constitution of their brain, and the peculiar temperaments given by Nature, is too clear to admit of question.

When we consider these things, we can scarcely avoid suspecting that much of moral evil is due to causes in which human agency plays a secondary part. And, when we mark the persistency of men and families in certain obliquities that bring them no reasonable return of good, our hearts may well incline to mingle pity with our condemnation.

RETRIBUTION OF NATIONAL SINS AND WHOLE-SALE INIQUITY.

Nothing is more obvious in the study of the laws of Nature than this, "The law for the whole is the law for the parts" of which the whole is composed.

There are national sins most terrible in enormity, — murders, robberies, devastation of wars, and tyrannical oppression. There are atrocities by excited popular fury and by religious persecutions. In all these sins, men are the instruments of transgression ; but it is by wholesale, and not by retail, that we are forced to judge them, — the government, the church, the mob, &c.

It is not pretended that the soldiers who battle for their country are individually answerable at the judgment for the murders of war. So far as they are concerned, we pronounce their action justifiable. But murder has been done, say, by the government ; and if

sin must be retributed in the next world, there is this difficulty, — governments have corporate souls that never leave the earth. They can not be punished ; nor can the law of retribution for sin be executed, either in whole or in part, unless it be done here, while the corporate soul is in its corporate body. That the sins of nations bring their own retribution is conceded ; that this retribution is adjusted here is proof that retribution of sin can be and is completed in this world : and, as the law for the whole is necessarily the law for the particles composing the whole, may it not be assumed as probable, if not as certain, that our theory of retribution postponed till after death is untenable ? There is a curious feature in our belief of eternal damnation. When we examine it, we find, that, however stoutly we may maintain it as a general theory, no man nor woman living has ever yet been able to conceive a wife, a husband, a father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother, however bad in life, actually in the flames of hell, under torment everlasting. Truly would life be made insupportable to mankind if such a belief could be practically entertained. It is the extravagant disproportion of the infliction to the transient obliquities of life, that deprives it of our hearty acceptance ; and hence we enter a plea for its modification.

For any good purpose to be effected by postponement of retribution to a far-off period after death we look to human reason in vain. The nearer the retribution to the crime, the greater its effect of restraint and correction. This is a maxim of all jurisprudence. The farther apart the cause and effect, the more attenuated the cords that connect them ; till the evils to be corrected,

and the society they concerned, having long passed away, the application comes too late for redress.

Like a cataplasin after death, it can neither cure the evil, nor save the patient.

It is popular belief that the soul was created pure ; that it is, so to say, the breath of God ; that virtue is rewarded, and vice punished for ever, after this life, except so much of both as may have been nullified here by balancing one against the other ; that there are only two places hereafter, one for the reward of the virtuous, and another for the eternal punishment of the wicked. This plan presents an insuperable difficulty : it provides no place for children, and for those whose accounts are evenly balanced. From the multitude of imbeciles and “nobodies” in the world, this must be a class exceeding in numbers the other two combined.

Sin is a product of mortality, as the body is that brings it forth. How can imagination invest it with immortality ? If the body at death is necessarily detached from the soul, because the soul can not be longer held, by reason of its immortality, sin also must relax its hold, and stay behind. But is sin mortal ? Every day we are told so. It is destructible by repentance, by atonement, by virtue, by forgiveness. Surely what is so entirely mortal can not go into immortality ; nor can we conceive of Deity’s changing its nature, and investing it with immortality to perpetuate a nuisance.

The theory is, that, because temporal sin offends the Deity, he makes it everlasting, and perpetuates the offense. There is a way to be rid of it here ; but he prefers to nurse it hereafter. Human reason can not

see in this any service to the Almighty ; none certainly to the soul which it does not reform, and restore to purity, as God provides in every other known instance that bears analogy. Every enlarged view reveals the purpose of turning evil into good, in contradiction to the charge, that, what he created good, he allows to run in everlasting evil.

THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS. HELL AND HEAVEN.

“ The Almighty Maker, thus throughout,
Discriminates each from each by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much wit
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points.”

From this parable, as generally interpreted, we get the idea, that, at some far-off day, all the souls of men which have ever been born on this planet (and we must suppose on all our sister planets who revolve around the same physical sun, and which therefore have the same moral central luminary) will be reclothed in the bodies they had at the moment of death ; and then will come the final judgment.

Then will a line of division be drawn, which will separate the good from the bad ; the former being rewarded by everlasting happiness, the latter by never-ending torment.

Let us analyze this proposition, and we shall find, that, by God's own pre-existing laws, the thing is impossible, even to Omnipotence.

Essay a physical division into the tall and the short, the strong and the weak, the old and the young, the healthy and the unhealthy, the wise and the unwise. After those which are well marked have been parted from each extreme end, there will remain the larger number, in whom the distinguishing requisites are so blended, that they can not be classed on either side. Take, for instance, the old and the young. Wherever you draw the line, you will have on each side of it men who differ from each other by but a minute, a second, a moment, of time; so that one can not be classed as old, and another young. There will be a middle-aged class, most numerous of all, which, being neither young nor old, can not be made to answer the conditions.

The moral man is in this respect exactly like the physical. By such microscopic shades do men differ in moral value, that, in a multitude of even a thousand millions now on the earth, no penal line can be drawn which would not necessarily separate men on opposite sides whose difference as to good and bad would be infinitesimal, and utterly inappreciable.

Let us begin at either end, or at any point. For instance, we will take the best man (if it be possible to find one exclusively entitled to that designation), and send him to heaven as a reward for his virtue. The next best man can differ from the first by a shade so inappreciable, that he goes in, of course; and so the third, the fourth, and so on to the end of the list, if there be ten million of worlds full. Not one can be admitted without involving the necessity of admitting the next, and thence on to the end.

Take the other end, and put the first in hell as a

sinner ; the next is a sinner extremely like him, and so on, for all are sinners : and thus, one by one, we must all go to hell ! You can not stop at any point, without having consigned to hell one man while you hold in your other hand a brother-man the exact moral image of the last, differing from him by so slight a shade, that, without manifest injustice, you can not make a different disposition of him. To exalt this one to heaven, while the other one is cast into hell, as the just reward of the vices of the one, and of the virtues of the other, is a proposition not to be entertained.

If there be any doctrine upon which the finger of God has stamped the word “impossible,” it is this division of his poor, weak, and helpless children returning to their Father’s home for rest, after the toils and sorrows of life, into two distinct classes ; and that he will cast out the greater number from his presence, and consign them to torments never to end. “Mercy, is thy star-written name but a blot in heaven ?”

The extravagance of this doctrine makes it of no effect in the repression of vice ; and, like laws which are not enforced, it would be wise to abolish it.

“Return good for evil” is announced as the law of heaven. “Be merciful, as your Father is merciful.” “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

Can we believe that these blessed maxims will ever cease to be heaven’s law ? the brightest jewel in the crown of Jehovah for ever and ever ?

The Church tried in vain to suppress intemperance by threats of Gehenna in a long hereafter. The temperance-society found success by preaching a more effective doctrine, viz., by showing that intemperance is its own

retributor here, and that temperance is more profitable here and immediately.

Let us extend this approved doctrine. It has proved its superiority in the repression of one vicious habit: pray, why shall we not try it in others? So much of all moral evil is induced by similar want of intelligent conception of its unprofitableness, that a system which is found to succeed in ameliorating one may be trusted as remedial of all others.

PURGATORY.

The invention of purgatory was doubtless suggested by the difficulties of extreme separation; but if there were ten thousand, or as many millions, of hells and heavens, and double that number of purgatories, it would not overcome the impossibilities. Besides this, there would still be wanted some place for that vast crowd of men and women whose lives are neutral, or balanced of good and evil, meriting no reward, and no punishment, of the sort provided by these theories. Children, imbeciles, fanatics, diseased minds, misguided innocents, would call for particular quarters.

It is a fact, that, while there is no extended belief in hell, the belief in purgatory among its sectarian religionists is very widely diffused because of its more reasonable pretensions. It is a place, like hell and heaven, in some undefined part of space; not in any of the stars we see, for each star is a sun, having full occupation in attending to its own planets, but somewhere farther off, or invisible, if nearer. There sinners

are sent to finish their purgation from venial sins unrequited here. They may be got out, however, by their living friends, through penitential masses performed at the altar through the clergy.

This doctrine is profitable to the Church, and the people get full value in comforting assurances for the cost of the consolation.

The courts of Paris in 1861 furnish us with evidence, that, while the Church does so much good, it is at times, like ourselves, led into temptation ; and it should never be entirely without some lay supervision.

The Church of "Les petits Pères," we think it is called (back of Rue de la Banque), is supposed to be under the particular patronage of the Virgin Mary ; and masses performed at its altars for redemption of souls in purgatory are understood to be taken to her Son in heaven direct, and to have preference of all others in time, as well as in certainty of procuring the desired release.

A case was brought to trial by a gentleman who suspected that the masses he paid for to get his brother out of purgatory had never been performed. The following facts were proved, viz., as many as thirty thousand purgatorial masses a year were paid for to this Church, at so much each. It was not possible to perform a tithe of them at its altar ; but it seemed sinful for the Church to refuse the money, which might do so much good. By interpretation it was decided, after the fashion of too many interpreters, that masses done at any other Church, by request of this favorite of the Virgin's, would be considered by her all the same. But, after exhausting every resort of this kind, there still

remained thousands unperformed ; for most of the priests are fully occupied by similar home-orders for masses.

M. Vidil, a devout bookseller, being applied to, offered to relieve the Church and its conscience, by undertaking to have all its masses performed. He took the job at a franc a mass. He opened out correspondence with every country curé in France, and let out as many masses as he could, paying in books. Still there remained a great number unaccomplished. He had a special "purgatorial department," with books of record. It was proved, that, to balance the mass-accounts, the bookkeeper would alter, for instance, thirty-five masses to three hundred and thirty-five ; and so on. Though this was published in the newspapers, the effect was of short duration. The faithful soon resumed the offering of masses as before. "Well," said a lady, "I have done my duty ; and, even if the masses are not said, the Virgin knows my sincerity, and will help my sister out of purgatory." Nothing better illustrates the power of faith to give comfort. It is only for this purpose that we present the narrative.

THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS SELF-REGULATING : IS MAN AN EXCEPTION ?

The physical world, the whole universe, reveals to us a perfect system of self-regulating machinery. Every movement diverges from and sins against the orthodox formularies of mathematical circuits. One force drives the planet forward, a contending force resists, and keeps the first force within bounds prescribed. It is an

eternal war of forces. It is life. There is no life on any other conditions ; nor can there be. The universe owes its stability, its eternity, to its being a self-regulating, self-correcting piece of machinery. Nations are governed by the same law of ever-erring circuit. Their rise and fall are proved by all history to be repetitions of the same law of error, of self-correction as it goes along, of dissolution and regeneration. Man, in his body, follows exactly the same law which his mother-earth does. Every transgression brings its own retribution. The overtasked organ suffers its penalty. Thus all things on earth and in the universe, and man himself, physically considered, correct their aberrations as they go along. It is the highest proof of perfection. But it is attempted to be shown that the same man, metaphysically considered, is not in every respect subject to the law of self-regulation. No reason can be given why the machinery of the moral world should not correct its own aberrations as it goes along ; but there are obvious reasons why this universal law is particularly requisite for the moral world. The more complex the movements, the greater the liability to derangement, the more self-regulation is necessary. Self-regulation is the test of perfection ; and it is not to be supposed that the moral is less perfect than the physical. The two are so intermixed that the cross-action of law at variance becomes an impossibility : in fact, we have proof that body and mind suffer, even-paced together. The drunken debauch which prostrates the body prostrates the mind ; and with the after-headache comes the stool of repentance, shame, and anguish of soul. If in such instances they are clearly co-sufferers, the doctrine of exception must be withdrawn.

GOOD AND EVIL WEIGHED IN THE SCALES.

The great prominence given to crime by journalists, by moral lecturers, and by social appetite for scandal, induces a suspicion that the proportion of sin in the world is greatly overstated. To give fair judgment, we should have an equal force occupied as earnestly in chronicling the daily, the hourly, the momentarily offices of virtue, of charity, mutual kindness, private and public beneficence, devotedness and self-denial, which, like the dew of heaven, keep moist the moral earth, and bless it evermore. Prisons may be filled; but hospitals much more, and public charities. Cruel men there are, but kind hearts and good Samaritans ten to one, nay, ten times ten (blessed be the Lord!) ever ready to aid the needy, and comfort the heavy of heart.

The self-sacrifices of women to their children, of friends over the couch of sickness; the words of sympathy which even malefactors call forth because of their tribulation; the tears of pity, an ever-living spring that flows for the widow and the orphan, for the broken spirit and the wayward course of erring kindred; the universal sympathy for suffering in all its forms, — do not these virtues far, and very far, outweigh all the sins and peccadilloes of thoughtless and misguided men; leaving, as in every other department of Nature, a large preponderance of good over evil? The vices are but undercurrents that are lost in the vast overflowings of virtue.

May we not hope, that, when sin has accomplished its

purpose of necessary discipline, its function, like the smart of a rod, ceases, and it is no more? that God permits it only so long as it serves his purpose, but never allows it to thwart his purpose, nor to destroy a soul he once created from his own breath, and blessed it, and bade it go forth and multiply? that as we came pure, like the rain from heaven, so, too, as the rain, when soiled of earth, returns by providential design back in purity to the skies whence it came, leaving its soil of earth behind, may not our souls under this general law of purgation, so clearly demonstrated, be returned self-cleansed and pure to the bosom of our Father and our God? Compared with the impractical and incomprehensible scheme of theology for giving transient evil perpetuity, how God-like is this moral circuit! How perfectly it resembles all other circuits in the movements of the universe; turning all partial evil into universal good, and proclaiming to the children of men the great truth, that over all there presides and rules a God whose wisdom and benevolence are boundless and everlasting!

WHAT WAS MAN MADE FOR?

“ The struggling tides of life, that seem
In shiftless, aimless course to tend,
Are eddies of the mighty stream
That rolls to its predestined end.”

Till we comprehend something of the purpose of our creation, we shall be led by metaphysics into all manner of misconceptions in relation to the Creator and to the law of retribution.

Nothing is so unfounded in probability as the notion that man was a special creation, that he was made for his own sake, and that all things else were made for his convenience. Creation is certainly a chain of connected and interdependent links. There is a common law for all; and upon its fixed and permanent character the mutual security of all depends, — suns by millions, planets by tens of millions, covered with living organisms, all evidently working out some joint purpose.

The scale is vast beyond conception. Whatever the purpose of this amazing machinery, man is but a microscopic wheel working in harmony with the rest. When we say man violates the laws of God, we scarcely consider the import of our words. The laws of God are the laws of the universe. Not one can be broken without parting the connection that holds creation together. Man is harnessed, like the rest, to his work. Whatever his allotted part, he has to do it in harmony with the grand plan. Whatever the purpose of the Creator, it cannot be frustrated: the ends designed are surely accomplished.

If these premises be correct, man's free agency has small latitude. What appears to be his choice must be under the compulsion of irresistible motives and influences, which keep him in his orbit. This dependence is better observed and more forcibly proved when we admit that the career of nations has its destined circuit. Men are the machinery. If the nation has its allotted purpose, men must so work as to serve that purpose. Men are, therefore, the instruments of Providence, working as a united mechanism, and not as each an individual and free-working artisan; for no plan could be

carried out that way. They are working not for any thing personal to themselves, but solely for some object in the plan of Providence.

The design of Providence being accomplished in perfection, whatever good and evil may have transpired seems to be balanced by the justification of the means that worked out a perfect ending. It lends probability to the assumption that the machinery regulates and corrects its own aberrations as it goes along; and thus it is in condition to begin a new round of usefulness in the next world. If man is to live hereafter, he must be moving. He cannot lie idling till a day of final judgment: he must be ever working for some useful end. It is the law of universal life. Nothing is made in vain. If man were placed in torment such as theory teaches, his usefulness would be at an end; a contingency that is against universal law, and therefore not to be entertained. We say every thing was created for good. This would furnish answer to the inquiry, What was man made for? and it is a denial of the allegation that his end, or any thing's end, can be evil.

THE SOUL.

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises in us, our life's star,
Has had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.”

There are two theories of the nature of the human soul, which have been disputed by learned theologians

for centuries. By some, the mind and the soul are considered synonymous terms ; by others, the soul is not the reasoning power, but some spiritual creation apart from the mind, which is the reasoning faculty. There would be no advocates for the latter, if the former theory did not cast a doubt on the immortality of the soul ; because, otherwise, the former theory answers to all the phenomena, while the latter has nothing to sustain it but speculation. Newton says, “ We must admit no more causes than are necessary to explain appearances.” Were it admitted that the soul is not the reasoning organ, it can not know good from evil ; nor can we hold it to be capable of sin ; or of accountability, if it have no reason.

The brain is the material machinery from the destructive distillation of which proceeds all thought. Whether virtuous or vicious, wise or unwise, the same weight of brain-matter is expended in its production.

Anatomy finds no difference in the quality of brain-matter in good and bad men ; but phrenology does find that the mind, the disposition, and the character of man, are determined by the form and relative arrangement of the matter of the brain. It is the predominance of some organs over others that causes men to have fixed characters, by which we can safely prophesy how such a one would act under given circumstances.

The natural disposition of men, like their natural talent for music, mechanical skill, and the like, is inherited from the parents, and is transmitted from generation to generation, with the physiognomy and phrenology that are its external signs. We know that parents transmit to their children sanguine, nervous, bilious,

impulsive, obstinate temperaments. Generosity, intellect, amiability, piousness, credulity, superstition, conscientiousness, sociality, pugnacity, timidity, roguishness, and all other qualities of kindred nature that go to make up men's characters, descend from parents to children.

But these temperaments, these attributes and dispositions, are the very properties by which we know one soul from another. Without these, there is no soul. This seems to compel the conclusion that soul or mind is transmitted from father to son. Without this admission, the soul of Adam can not be said to have transmitted its sin to the souls of his descendants. Is man's soul, then, not immortal? The question is not affected by the condition of transmissibility, which is rather in proof that the soul never dies; since part, at least, of the soul of the parents is shown to live in their children. If any part lives on, all parts live; for the elemental law for the parts is the law for the whole. How the soul can live out of the law that makes a material body necessary to its usefulness, to its very life, sustenance, and servitude in this world, is what our dim reason can not conceive. Nor can any one imagine how a simple spirit can do any thing, without some material machinery to work at its bidding. The soul of music is powerless in many a man for want of fit material organs to give it expression. He can dream of song and harp, he may hear and judge of music; but he can give no sign, nor turn it to account. The grand demonstrations of Almighty Power in the universe come through material suns and planets, and material growth everywhere doing his service. And we can not conceive of man's spirit being useful without similar associations. The finest

conceptions of soul die for want of means to put them in execution.

“God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul,” is a poetical way of saying that the first air inspired causes man to become a living soul; and it is proof, that, at the time it was written, the theory was, that the soul is not a something ready-made, and inserted in the body at birth, but that it comes from, or is generated by, the action of the air upon the bodily organs. When this conjunction occurred, the man became a living soul. The idea seems to be that a live body is necessary to constitute a living soul; that without the body, and the process of life in it, there would not have been a living soul; and that a living soul includes the whole man bodily.

From this we gather that they believed soul to be an element that requires material organs to give it personality, and living force and effect. Our doctrine of the resurrection of the body is an indorsement of these primitive views. The Egyptians before Moses had the same idea; but, knowing the insuperable difficulty of reconstructing the identical body after all its elements were merged in the general ocean of air from which they came, the Egyptians preserved the body, so as to have a nucleus at least of identity, by which every returning soul would know its own incasement. Our theology is vague in this matter. There is to be a general resurrection of all the bodies of men and infants that ever lived, at some indefinite period, when there will be a general judgment and final disposition. This appears to be the plan of weak, human conception. Its clumsiness marks it an imposition upon credulity.

What becomes of the souls of this multitude between death and resurrection is not satisfactorily stated. The Egyptians held the only consistent theory, viz., that souls return to the ocean of spirit-element whence they came, and the resurrected body is again made a living soul by inspiring the element in purity as it did before ; thus bringing the process within the operation of a general law, instead of a special Providence for each case, which is repugnant to reason and to all known laws of the universe.

We may not be able to reconcile these suggestions with popular conceptions ; but we feel the most confident trust in Providence, that, however concealed from us the plan, the soul is immortal and indestructible ; and that, after its pilgrimage here, its sleep will be short before it is assigned to a new personal investment, and to new work in new fields of usefulness.

“ It must be so, Plato : thou reasonest well.
’Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;
’Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.”

AN OBJECTION.

A computation has been made, showing, that, if all the bodies that lived on the earth were brought back by resurrection, not only would there be no standing-room, but if the surplus, after covering sea and land, were to be placed on the heads of those below, and piled up to the moon, there would be scant room for the multitude.

If resurrection of the body be the law, it must apply to our companion planets; and all space in this solar system, and in all others, would be packed with bodies of flesh having organs not adapted to any life but that of the planet for which they were expressly made.

A TWIN SOUL.

“ So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted.”

Chang and Eng (personally known to us) are a pair of Siamese male twins, many years resident in Wilkes County, North Carolina, United States of America. They were at first exhibited at Peal's Museum in New York.

They bought a farm, which they now occupy; and they had slaves to work it.

They are united inseparably by an elastic band of flesh, about the size of a woman's wrist, just below the breast-bone. This band is about four inches long, and has an elastic play of perhaps two inches. It establishes a perfect interchange of arterial blood between them; so that the blood of one is equally the blood of the other. The result of this exhibits in a marked manner its benevolent uses under Providence. As the two are inseparably bound, it would be most awkward and distressing if discordant feelings or tastes should arise. Now, this interchange of blood has the effect of making the two literally of one mind and of one soul. What the one likes and dislikes, so exactly the other.

When one hungers or thirsts, the other also. The calls of Nature are to each simultaneous. In sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, they are one. One may not be irritated without the other, and at the same moment. Their thoughts run ever in the same channel, and their dispositions are alike. When asked a question, the inclination is to answer together; on which occasions, their answers are always of the same purport, and but little different in phrase. One, however, probably inheriting from the mother, is a trifle quicker of tongue; and generally he is the talking partner. A case has occurred to show, that, when fighting is to be done, they pitch in lustily together. If sin is committed, it is clearly a partnership affair. The sin may be but a single affair: so it must be charged in undivided halves. The last thing that may strike you is that these inseparables could ever marry; but they have been married for many years, and have many children. Their wives are sisters, American women.

They fall asleep together, and wake together; and what one does, so the other. None so virtuous as they; for one can not get into mischief without the other being about to gaze.

They will die together in mutual embrace. This is a case in which the expression has meaning, "My brother and I are one."

Psychologists behold here a twin soul, entirely bound by physical circumstances, to be in passion and in good and evil together; and showing more certainly than in any other instance that these are determined by the blood and the structural organs. Spiritualistic casuists may find curious exercise of thought in dealing with

them at the judgment. Their inconvenient twin-bond would have to accompany them; and, should they be awarded differently, what a puzzle! or, should their twinship of soul necessitate a unity of award, then, again, the compulsion gives perplexing reflections.

IMMORTALITY.

“All forms that perish other forms supply :
By turns we catch the vital breath, and die.
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.

He who studies Nature finds immortality is the universal law. Nothing is destructible. Every thing changes its form; but none of its elements lose their life. Death is a dissolution of elements from one association, that they may enter into other combinations.

Immortality means ever living: not created to-day, and thereafter living always, but ever living, — before to-day as after to-day.

That the universe was ever a vacancy with nothing in it is inconceivable. Creation has reference to forms, not to the elements of which the forms are made up. Regarding the original elements that fill all space, we are obliged, because of their indestructibility, to assume them to be like Deity, without beginning, and to leave it as incomprehensible to human intellect.

If all things be immortal, we need not discuss the immortality of the human soul.

It may be that the spirit of man, in being released

from its bondage of earth, may need some disintegration for its restoration to purity, under that most beautiful, self-cleansing law elsewhere universal, before it is supplied with a new form suited to the new condition of life elsewhere, and for which its former shape would be all unfitted. Its companion the body is certainly so cleansed, and restored to new uses.

As distinguished from theologic conceptions, this plan seems better to accord with the universal law of making evil temporary, and good eternal ; and its benevolence, as well as its seeming wisdom in making all things end well, commends it to us as giving higher conceptions of the paternal relationship between the Great Spirit and the children of his creation.

“ To have the power to forgive
Is empire and prerogative ;
And it is in crowns a nobler gem
To grant a pardon than condemn.”

THE INDIAN'S FAITH IN HEREAFTER.

In common with other heathens generally, the Indian is a firm believer in the immortality of the soul. The idea seems to have come from the inspiration of Nature. He thinks that heaven has fine ranges of forest, and splendid game for the huntsman. His proverbial contempt of death is supposed to be on this account ; but he endures any amount of torture without wincing, believing that the Great Spirit admires fortitude. He is of all the world most scrupulous of his

promise, his dignity, and his honor. The following, from an eye-witness, will illustrate this : —

At a settlement of Cherokee Indians, twenty-five miles from Van Buren, in Arkansas, an Indian named Nat was tried by his own tribe for murder, and sentenced to be hanged. The whole tribe assembled ; and the sheriff, with Nat alongside, led the way along the bank of the Arkansas, in quest of a suitable tree. After a long search, one was found, — a fine cotton-wood, with a branch standing out almost horizontally.

“ What do you think of that, Nat ? ”

“ Can’t find a better.”

Before being executed, Nat said he would like to take his last swim in the river, which was at once allowed. He divested himself of his blanket, and in a moment was luxuriating in the cooling waters. The tribe, seated on the bank, took a general smoke of the pipe ; and Nat, when satisfied, returned, adjusted his blanket, and presented himself, ready to submit to the course of the law. There was no guard. The Indian’s honor is his guard.

The sheriff ordered him to climb the tree, which he did like a squirrel. The officer followed with the rope, and soon adjusted it, — the noose on the neck, the end to the branch. “ Now, Nat, I am going down. When I say, ‘ Jump,’ you spring off.” — “ Agreed.” As soon as he reached the ground, he called, “ Jump, Nat ; ” and Nat sprang off.

The fall was so great that death was instantaneous.

Ever so the Indian meets the summons of death, looking forward to a happy immortality.

THE DEVIL.

The intimate relationship of all religions is shown in this, that there is no religion without a Devil. There is a singular uniformity, a perfect identity, in the attributes and functions assigned to him by every religion of the world. Our own may be taken as representing the belief of nearly all religions. But the Persians, and several others who have preceded us in getting the Trinity revealed to them, have given the omnipresent Devil the third place in the Godhead of three in one,—the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer.

Zoroaster taught that a time will come when all evil will become good, even the Devil and his angels. Then the empire of the good spirit will prevail, and continue for ever. (Rotteck.)

Goodrich found the Devil in every religion in Africa, and always his color is white!

Most of the ancient philosophers speak of the popular Devil as an imaginary being, which all religions find it necessary to hold in terror over the vulgar. They say that superior minds do not require it, because they understand that evil deeds bring their own retribution; and this is sufficient restraint.

The Buddhists hold that the Devil is working out a purpose that is temporary; and that all evil purges itself: “Can the dust of earth rise, and defile the beauty of the sky?”

Hindoo philosophers say, that, to terrify the multitude who want understanding, a personal Devil is indispensable.

SATAN TRACED IN HISTORY.

“High ’mid the rolling clouds darkly broods
The Adversary. Wide his sight extends
Upon the peopled earth beneath him, stretched
In multitudinous contention.”

As Satan is the popular father of evil among Christians, we have to speak of him. Let us take a rapid review of the history of this curious being according to Christian records, and we shall find ourselves in a maze of bewilderment.

The first we hear of the Evil Spirit is in the history of creation itself, where he appears as a pre-existent, uncreated being, exercising a predominant power over the children of God.

While God rested from his labor, satisfied that every thing was good and secure, Satan, who was present listening to God’s first commandment, watching his opportunity, won over Adam and Eve to his service. He seems to have distinguished consideration, and an immunity from punishment; for God curses only the innocent serpent-race, whose form he assumed. The history of the deluge informs us that the Devil had been so successful in his battle against God, that he had won over to his side the whole vast multitude of God’s children, except one family of eight persons; and he made God grieve in his heart that he had ever made man at all. Here, again, not an irreverent word is breathed towards his Satanic Majesty. The Almighty seems to confess himself beaten in a fair game. Instead

of attempting to destroy the mischief-maker, he resorted to the terrible expedient of destroying all his adherents and their innocent children, and every beast, bird, and reptile of the earth, and make a new start at creation, in hopes, apparently, of succeeding better in the second effort.

The Evil Spirit was not drowned ; but, as if refreshed by the bath, he went to work with new vigor, and kept uppermost in his struggle with God, till the time of Christ, when God tried another scheme, of an opposite character, to defeat the machinations and the superior power of Satan.

As Satan took the shape of a serpent, and successfully beguiled mankind from Adam to Christ, God now took the shape of a man, condescending to go through the natural formularies of conception, childhood, and thirty years of preparation for one year's preaching to win back the people the Devil had got all to himself as before. At two personal interviews between the Majesties of the opposing realms, Christ treated Satan with the courtesy of a fair belligerent. They journeyed together to Jerusalem, and afterwards to a prospect summit ; the Devil leading Christ as a master would his guest. On these occasions, they measured wits, and quoted Scripture with equal felicity. Satan spoke of his great power over the earth, and offered to transfer it to Christ on certain terms. There was no denying that he had the power he claimed ; for it was to get it away from him that Jesus came. But Jesus declined acceding to the terms of sale. Mark says the companionship lasted forty days. There does not appear to have been any effort by Jesus to convert Satan. It was all the

other way: it was Satan tempting Jesus. Finally, they parted without any apparent breach of courtesy, but simply without a concordat.

The most extraordinary thing in the history of the Devil, in his connection with Christianity, is that he should be one of the first to proclaim Jesus aloud and openly to be the Christ, the Son of God; while Jesus himself desired him not to speak of it (Luke iv. 41; Mark i. 24). He appears again helping to spread this truth (Luke viii. 28; Mark v. 7; Matt. viii. 29). It seems incredible that "the father of lies" should be selected for the proclamation of the truth.

Again: Satan asked a favor, which Jesus politely granted, allowing him to enter the bodies of two thousand swine, and drown them. Finally Jesus was killed expressly to redeem mankind from the thralldom of Satan, in a way that there might be no mistake. Well, after over eighteen hundred years of experience, and all the efforts of organized churches and priesthods, what has been the success this time? Is the Devil dead? No. Has his power been diminished? No. Has any one devilish wickedness been removed? or are men in any way an iota less sinful? Not a particle: it is all the other way.

And what is the position of Satan in the Church to-day? Suppose this master-spirit of evil were suddenly destroyed, would the news be received as glad tidings by the pulpit? or would theology complain of the disturbance of a time-honored doctrine?

When we deny to all other people God-given religions, we know not what terrible conclusions are enforced by logical deduction. If Satan inspired Confucius and

Brahma, Buddha, Zoroaster, and Mohammed, he is the first and real father of the same truths as Christianity has been much tardier in proclaiming. We put him in advance of God, even in religious care for mankind. By declaring all other religions false, and not of God, we charge that God has from the beginning abandoned nine-tenths of his children to the supreme glory and dominion of Satan. Is it not singular that the Devil, instead of being in the torments of hell, has a free foot and his life is spent in hunting game, with all the pleasure of ample success? If this be hell, how many souls would prefer to join him in the sport of "the damned," than to join the psalm-singing chorus promised in heaven! Compared with the slow process of the Holy Ghost, how the Devil incarnates himself at sight, possesses himself of a body, gets a crowd of followers, and can afford even to help his rival to get believers and followers, as if he courted the opposition!

One can not make this brief and truthful summary of the history of the Evil Spirit, as it is given in our Scriptures, without appearing to burlesque. Yet the doctrine is ingrafted upon popular faith, and we treat it seriously. It is the object of this book to turn popular sentiment into a new current of thought, that will make the nature of evil more comprehensible, and the supremacy of God unquestioned.

Besides the immolation of millions at the deluge, and hundreds of millions in religious wars before Christ, and again hundreds of millions since, we have again tens of thousands of millions of damned souls sacrificed to Satan, and inconceivable millions fighting the Evil Spirit with all the enginery of religion and power of

prayer, without disturbing his complacency or impressing his power, in a period of six thousand years. His omnipresence we admit ; his omnipotence for evil seems a logical concession ; his immortality and his eternity are a fair sequence. Let the triune God be the God of good, we make Satan the unity God of evil ; for we invest him with Godlike attributes. In the battle for human souls, popular theology makes this fourth person of the Godhead the conqueror, and the God of gods, in derogation of the honor and glory of the one supreme God of eternal good, and of temporary evil convertible into good,—the Lord God Almighty. We put it to all lovers of our religion to say if it would not profit us to erase from the record this offense to reason and faith, even if we have to pronounce against it as interpolation.

THE FEMALE PRINCIPLE EXCLUDED.

When we consider that man has availed himself of his privilege as writer of history to fasten upon the first created woman the origin of evil, it is indeed singular that he has not, in any of the religions of the world, of all of which man is the evangelist, availed of the opportunity and the consistency to have a she-devil. So much mischief is charged to the feminine principle on earth, that one would suppose the principle would be indispensable to perfection in the evil omnipotence of Satan.

It is, perhaps, an offset to this, that we exclude women from angeldom. All angels are young men with wings.

Had there been but one female angel, she would in all delicacy have been sent to Mary to speak of her novel process of conception in the absence of her husband.

This exclusion of women from angeldom is the more singular, when we consider that woman is the angel of the world. In all that is good and pure and holy and angelic, woman is the superior being; and it would be a fairer representation, if all angels were feminine, and the masculine principle their disciplinary devils, who supply objects for the exercise of their overflowing goodness. From the Godhead also, man's theology excludes the female principle, which, on earth, is the great generator in every department of life, vegetable, animal, and human. Three male persons are made to compose the whole Deity, in spite of this revelation, and in contradiction to the assumption, that, after the image of God, male and female, created he them.

If "woman's rights" should enter into theology, their brighter inspiration may lead to new conceptions.

THE CHURCH AND THE COMING REFORMATION.

"When doctrines meet with general reprobation,
It is not heresy, but reformation."

The Church is the business-partner of religion. In all countries, the Church is entirely human, though the religion be divine. The Church is an institution: it has, therefore, no soul, no conscience, no God, no Devil, but only temporality. The care of souls is not the concern of the institution, but the care of itself, increase

of its temporal wealth and power. Authorized interpretations of Scripture, the fabrication of dogmas, of miracles, of sacred relics, such as bones of saints, pieces of the cross, liquefying the blood of saints, new revelations, and the like, are, by a universal law, common to all religious institutions of the past and the present, as a necessity. If ours have any similar characteristics, it only goes to show that the like compulsion of law holds us as well as the rest, and we must accept them as necessity.

The true question before the Church, as before mercantile institutions, is, Will it pay? Whatever doctrine the Church inaugurates pays in proportion to the belief it commands. The truth of a dogma is of no consequence, even to the people. True or untrue, if they believe it, it is equally profitable to every one concerned, as a bond of union around the moral precepts it is made to carry; and it is our central bond to the Church. The moral law which God has given is exactly alike in every religion of the world, except the law of retaliation in Moses, so pointedly condemned by Christ. But the dogmas which envelop it, and make it practical for sustaining interest and reiterated instruction, vary in every religion to suit the believing capacity of the people in the various climates and ages of the world. Faith is of prime necessity. "Believe, and be saved," is the common standard and the watchword of all religions. To those who have faith, a sermon can be preached out of the Bible of any and every religion, with equal moral effect, according to the eloquence of the preacher and the constitutional susceptibility of the congregation. It is not so much the kind of food, as the manner of

cooking, that makes good digestion and healthful nourishment.

Faith is, therefore, every thing to the temporal interest of the Church, as well as the spiritual interest of the people. Want of faith is, of course, equally prejudicial ; and it is proportionally disastrous when faith lapses into merely nominal belief, without animation.

On this sound basis we presume to address to the Church some words of counsel.

The moral truths of Christianity are eternal ; but its dogmas are wisely susceptible of variation. Those which we have were fabricated in times of general ignorance on the part of the people, and in councils of the Church ruled by the necessity of accommodating the dogmas to the ignorance of the times. Every new dogma was fought through angry discussion, before its final acceptance. The Scriptures may be covered by claim of divine inspiration, but the dogmas not.

It is painfully apparent that the general unbelief and unconcern in our religion are due to this fact, viz., that the dogmas of an age of general ignorance can not pass through the ordeal of the higher reasoning powers and closer scrutiny of this age of universal education and refined intelligence. We put it to the Church to decide if this be unreasonable. Supposing that it is so pronounced, it is, nevertheless, an accomplished fact. Unbelief is spreading with education ; and there is reason to fear, that, if the existing Church does not meet the requirement, some reformer will rise, who will successfully present acceptable doctrine, and what is now orthodox may become heterodoxy, to the grievous injury of existing institutions. Nothing is so impossible as to resist

the onward progress of new thought, with weapons of antiquated structure, — the crossbow of olden times against the rifled repeaters of the new era.

What we desire is, that the Church will comprehend the situation ; and, if it recognize the necessity for change, that it will consider the more rapid movements of this age, and bestir itself.

Guizot describes the age precursive of the Reformation of Luther : —

“ The whole mass was quickened. It was a period of voyages, travels, enterprises, discoveries, and inventions of every kind. The coast of Africa was explored, the passage discovered around the Cape of Good Hope, to India. America was discovered, and commerce widely extended. Gunpowder, the compass, engraving on copper, linen, paper, and printing were among the inventions. This spirit opened the avenue to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.” History repeats itself. Is not this nineteenth century, through exactly similar causes, greatly intensified, opening the avenue to a reformation of far greater latitude ?

The Rev. Dr. Bellows sounds the alarm. In his recent tour of Germany, he found everywhere, and among all classes, a painful dying-out of the religious element. And so completely are the doctrines of Christianity worn out of faith, that there is no hope for any new growth of religion out of the old elements.

This remark applies equally to France and Italy. The contagion spreads rapidly in England, and in the States of America.

Believing that the ancient ecclesiastical dogmas endanger our religion itself, we invite all earnest minds to re-

view them, and prepare either to defend them by new and stronger reasoning, or, seeing that the age of light will hold to them no longer, abandon them, after having studied out new dogmas that will commend themselves to larger and more active acceptance; that faith may revive, and give new life and usefulness to our religion.

As an aid to this review, we present a few selections, with the criticisms which we may expect to meet from the coming spirit of investigation, and from the instinctive want of a creed that will command enlightened faith with the educated masses, and with other nations that we try to win over to Christianity.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

“Give an account of thy stewardship.”

WE put it to thinking Christians to say which would form the more enduring basis, as well as the more winning to converts, and the more acceptable to God, — the ancient miracles of which we can boast, or the modern good our religion can show it has achieved. Which prayer is most profitable, — “Lord, we thank thee that our religion is better than others;” or, “Lord, we confess that it has not made us a better people than our neighbors”?

The dean of Carlisle (August, 1862) denounces the sad catalogue of England’s sins, — “our wanton luxury,

our licentiousness, our drunkenness, our commercial and manufacturing frauds." Another clergyman (same date) states that there are six hundred thousand habitual drunkards, and sixty thousand yearly deaths from drunkenness; nine million of Englishmen who never go to church, and two hundred and fifty thousand common prostitutes.

Let us look fairly in the face the results that have been produced by Christianity as we interpret and administer it.

Let us begin with its object, as avowed by Jesus, viz., to supply a more practical religion, and to make people better than they could be under the Jewish religion; to diminish evil, and increase virtue.

We have Israelites enough in Christendom, who are guided by the old religion, to enable us to settle the question by fair and unanswerable comparison.

Let us look in our prisons, and count the Jews. Run your eye over the criminal calendars: among the assaults, the wife-beating, the pickpockets, the forgers, the robbers, and murderers, how many Jews? Make the rounds of Leicester Square, and among the abandoned women, how many Jews? Consult the court-records: how many *crim. cons.* and divorce-suitors are Israelites? In the lunatic asylums, how many Jews show the results of excesses, either personal, parental, or social?

Shall we walk through our poorhouses, and seek for Jews abandoned to this awful form of degradation?

Hast seen a beggar Jew? Amid the pugilists, the rowdies, the gambling-hells, the night-poachers, how many?

In the feasting-house, point out a Jew making a God of his belly!

Search the highways and the byways, and amid the ragged, unclean, spot a single Israelite ! But, lest you tire, we tax your search only once more. Amid the drunken, besotted thousands in Christian dram-shops, and in the highways of this Christian people and this land of the better religion, backed up by the most powerful government and most lavish waste of gold, show thou, if thou canst, a staggering Israelite ! Ay, thou mayest affect to despise him and his religion ; but before God, O Christian ! (religions each in hand) the Jew is this day a better man than thou.

If we turn our eyes to the Parsee, to the Moham-medan, or to the Hindoo, we shall find the comparison nothing better for our side. Nay, in any fair test, the Mormon religion excels ours in making its community universally pious and prayerful, in restraining crime, and in promoting charity and every-day practice of virtue.

“For forms of faith let fools contend :
The well administered is best.”

The fault is in the administration of ours. We have clung too long to superstitions fabricated in an age of ignorance, till they are universally disbelieved. We have banished inspired talent by filling our pulpits with milk-and-water men, who for bread bind themselves to old superstitions. We persecute the free mind, and forbid it to soar to heaven and seek its light there. “All wisdom, all godliness, all human progress, end in, and must for ever stop at, the Thirty-nine Articles and the old-fashioned Prayer-book.”

Let the Church look to its danger. The hour ap-

proaches. The moral world has accelerated its speed; and, alas for the Church if it stand still while all else goes forward! Shall we say that the proper test, the true criterion, of a religion, is the betterment of the people, the reduction of crime, the notability of virtue? Surely, if it be barren of these, it fails in its only purpose; and upon no other issue can it be judged.

Now, rather than admit that the religion of Christ is at fault, that Jesus died to redeem men from sin, and, instead, they are greater sinners than before, is it not reasonable that we question whether what is preached to us is really the religion that Jesus taught?

If, taking the Thirty-nine Articles one by one, and searching the Scriptures, we find no such words, expressions, nor doctrines, from the lips of Christ; if we compare the Episcopal-Church constitution and service, the prayer-book system, the monopoly of benefices, the lordly high priests, and the rest of the establishment, with the system and manner of Jesus and his apostles, and find no similitude and no authorization, — if, then, we pray God for light and counsel, we shall hear a voice from heaven saying, “Reformation!” “Come back to the original faith and practice of Jesus, and therein will be found salvation.”

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION.

“Reason can and ought to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the morality and evidence, of revelation.” — BISHOP BUTLER.

True inspiration is the power of lighting up the inert minds of the mass by felicitous expression and soul-

stirring appeal ; of winning men by apt illustration, and by touching the inner life-springs which lie beyond the reach of ordinary address. It is not a gift of learning : it is an instinct inherent in men who give themselves up to the impulse of the spirit, and to the electric conduction of believing listeners. It is not of art, but of Nature ; not of man's elaboration, but of Nature's spontaneous production. This is the true and only intelligible definition of the word. It is but two centuries since it got a change of meaning when applied to our Gospels. To him who believes that the soul of man is the inspired breath of God (as in Genesis), there can be no difficulty in understanding what is inspiration. The mind of man is a God-working organization. When we seek to distinguish instinct from reason, we merely attribute the former to the direct workings of ever-present and ever-guiding Providence ; the latter, still to Providence as its creator : but to man's mind left to itself as it were, we attribute his reasoning faculty.

It is when a valuable thought comes unbidden to the mind, revealing some clearer insight into what reason had left unfathomed, that we properly apply inspiration as a distinctive term. It is in some respects not unlike dream-thoughts, that come when the mind is not awake, and not making effort. Many of the greatest discoveries in science, philosophy, and moral explication, have come to man in this apparently unbidden way ; but probably never except to minds that had previously engrossed their thoughts with the study of the matter.

To whatever source we refer this exaltation, none can separate it from connection with the spirit-working

which has been claimed by every religious founder under the name of inspiration or revelation. Each religion of a thousand like our own claims, as we have said, that its inspiration is of a peculiarly God-sent kind, and all the rest impostures. But as all the moral truths taught by one are, with slight variation of words, repetitions of the same axioms that have been taught by all the others, it would be more logical to admit that they, like many rivulets, came from one source, the source of all things physical and moral, — the God of all revelators, and all peoples of whatever religion under the sun ; making impartial distribution among his children, suiting the form to the varied mind. This kind of inspiration we may comprehend ; for all men of deep thinking have knowledge of it, — every poet and philosopher as well as prophet and religious law-giver. So, also, we know by personal experience what is the inspiration of a popular preacher, who, by the manner of uttering what may contain no new idea whatever, leads men captive, and converts unbelievers to the faith. Whether directly or indirectly, it is from heaven that this creative power can only proceed. It is common to all religions, and by no means the most exalted in ours.

But what we can not conceive is the inspiration of the newspaper reporter, for instance, who, after the sermon, gathers up from the crowd reminiscences of what the inspired man said, and sets them in order for publication.

Yet this is what we call inspiration and revelation in the gospel reporters of the sermons of Christ ; and, cruelly indeed, we must say, it has got to be held that

he who does not admit this must be held to disbelieve the inspiration of Jesus himself; against the logic of which all good-willing men should make protest. Rather he the more believes in Christ's inspiration who does not believe in the inspiration of others to complete his unfinished mission. It is a curious idea, that finds no plea in reason, or out of it, that would especially inspire four different persons to write down the openly-proclaimed sayings and doings of another person, which is quite within the competency of one ordinary clerk. It is making too cheap the dispensation of miracles. Besides, as a literary production, or as a history, it is not miraculously clear above ordinary human writing. The history was susceptible of better presentation by any common historian without aid of miracles. And what must be thought of the writers themselves, who, having written by special power of miracle from God, prefer to let it go forth to the world as words of their own compilation, and to conceal from us the miraculous aid vouchsafed them! In no line of any of the Gospels is any acknowledgment of inspiration or revelation. Either, then, they are dishonest by claiming what is not theirs, or we are sacrilegious forgers of the name of God when we affix it to documents, which, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, God never wrote nor dictated.

A NEW VIEW OF RETRIBUTION AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE.

“It is impossible but what offenses will come.” — LUKE xvii. 1 ; MATT. xviii. 17.

The diversity of character among men has been shown to be a necessity. Good and evil, like life and death, light and shade, and other contrasts, are mutual necessities to the very existence of each other. Evil is the slave of good, vice is the life of virtue, want is the parent of charity, sickness is the guardian of health, servants are a necessity to the governing head, death is indispensable to break up exhausted forms, and to supply material for new life.

If these moral contrasts be necessary, they must have counter moral agents. Those we call evil, and those we call good, working together as they do in harmony as to final results, make it requisite that there shall be allotted to men the several parts, good and evil, in the drama of life which they enact. There is no escape from this logical sequence.

What if it should be the plan of Providence, instead of rewarding the good, already well compensated by approving conscience and social position, that the poor, the suffering, the victims of vicious propensities, who are tormented in life by doing the necessary evil, should have claim to compensation hereafter ! We are God's children ; and, if their inheritance is to be fairly shared, rotation in office in the next life would seem not unreasonable. God's ways are not man's judgments. One

popular doctrine was framed on the Mosaic doctrine of an "eye for an eye,"—eternal hell for temporary aberrations; but Jesus condemned the whole scheme, in denouncing the doctrine it is founded upon as being ungodly, and worthy of severest condemnation.

What we are suggesting is not of our cogitation. It is our Saviour's own teaching in the illustration of the rich man and Lazarus.

The rich man lived sumptuously in this life, without any sin being charged. He had his comforts here. Lazarus was poor, without any virtue being credited. He had his torments here. In consequence, they changed places in the next world. The rich man took his turn at the torments, and the poor man took his turn at the comforts. When the rich man asked to be relieved, Abraham clearly enunciated a doctrine of God to show the justice of the change and the award. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and, likewise, Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Corroborated as doctrine by Luke vi. 24. We have not a dogma of Christianity a tenth part so clearly stated as this; and it is for this reason we ask for it such consideration as the sense which is wrapped up in it entitles it to receive. We must have new dogmas to replace those which are getting into discredit because of enlightenment; and here is a fair basis for a new fabrication, which can be modified to suit the popular acceptance. Our Saviour had some view of the kind regarding rotation and change of relative positions hereafter; and it is not doing our duty to rule out its consideration.

SCRIPTURE METAPHORS.

Had the metaphors of Scripture been confined to the Asiatics, to whom they were addressed, there would have been less danger of misapprehension ; for they are in common use there to this time. But to us, their metaphors deprive the Gospels of all the effect of revelation : we want another revelation to explain their meaning. After much angry and very bitter contention between Arians and Athanasians in the fourth century, the Council of Nice decided that “Son of God” must be taken as having a literal meaning, and not spiritual. And the bishop was condemned, who, like Origen (A.D. 230), taught its meaning to be “son by adoption.” The Scriptures are for Christians for all time ; and we of this age being answerable, according to the light God gives us, should be held inexcusable if we permit any ancient disputation to bar us from at all times consulting the oracle of heaven, and working out our salvation by the word of God, in preference to the stoutly-contested vote of any theologic assembly.

In devoutly searching the Scriptures to find what was meant by “Son of God,” we find reason to justify the Church of this age in reviewing the decision of the Council of Nice, in response to the tacit calls of infidelity, for the removal of stumbling-blocks to faith. In the Gospel of John i. 12, we find that “Sons of God” was a religious title assumed by the new sect ; which title all converts were entitled to. “Children of God” is used in the same sense, Luke xx. 36, and Phil. ii. 15.

All that are moved by the Spirit are "children of God." You are children, in the Spirit by which we call God father (Romans). John x. 35, gives "inspired of God" as the meaning of "son." Father and Son are forbidden to be used, except spiritually (Matt. xxiii. 9). Jesus set the example by disclaiming his natural mother, brothers, and sisters. If Paul had read "Son of God" literally, he could not have said, without explanation, Jesus was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and was declared to be "Son of God, according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 3)

This seems conclusive of Paul's understanding of the term. It is a denial of the miraculous conception, and an affirmation of the carnal paternity from Joseph and from David, which prophecy required. This is confirmed in Cor. xv. 45, &c., where Paul explains that the body of Jesus was formed first, and a living spirit afterwards. (As sons) we are with Jesus, coheritors of God (Rom. viii. 17). God begot us in the word of truth; Paul begot many in Jesus; he suffered the pains of childbirth in giving spiritual birth to a convert: metaphor can not go farther. Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers, meaning spiritually born again as they were into one brotherhood (Rom. viii. 9). Paul, a bachelor, calls Timothy his son, and again his brother in Christ. We have an early example in Genesis of a religious sect calling themselves "the 'Sons of God,' who married the daughters of men" (brothers). Jesus did not take on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. It behooved him in all things to be made like his brethren (Heb. ii. 16, 17).

Is not this a point-blank denial of the paternity of

the Holy Ghost, and equally proof that he came from the seed of man? Jesus was made a little lower than the angels; and for suffering death he receives the crown of honor and of glory (in heaven) (Heb. ii. 9). He died for his own sins as well as for others' (Heb. v. 3). Had Jesus been generated by the Holy Ghost, or had the chapters in Matthew and Luke narrating it been genuine gospel, and not subsequent interpolation, the writers could not have chronicled the second investment, and spiritually begetting by the Holy Ghost at the baptism of John. The two stories are so manifestly inconsistent, that one of them should be discredited.

“Thou art my son: this day I have begotten thee.” This the correct quotation; for Paul tells us so (Heb. i. 5, and v. 5). The same expression is in Psalms. Strauss tells us that Justin Martyr so quoted it, A. D. 140, also Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, and copies of Luke still extant. (It was not my *only* son.) There is therefore a certainty that “this day,” &c., has been expunged by transcribers since the time of Paul and Justin Martyr; and it seems that the infancy chapters were added to the original Gospels, which then required the erasure. Pious frauds of this kind to make doctrine are charged by Lardner, Mosheim, Middleton, Jortin, Priestley, Neander, and others. The passage in one edition of Josephus, speaking of Jesus, and *apropos* to nothing before or after it, is pronounced an evident interpolation, by Blondell, Le Clerc, Bishop Warburton, and many others. Eusebius is accused of it; for of numerous authorities before Eusebius, who referred to every evidence that might favor the cause, not one quoted it. Rotteck's History, vol. ii. p. 143, &c., gives

us specific accounts of the manifold corruptions and heretical doctrines of the early Christians. He says they changed the whole character of Christianity by sophisms and subtilities of theology. The time came, as prophesied by Paul, "when they would not be content with sound doctrine; when they would turn their ears from truth to fables." Epiphanius, Jerome, Austin, and Chrysostom in the fourth century, say that to the Gospel of John alone we are indebted for a knowledge of the divinity of Christ.

It is certain that Stephen the martyr knew nothing of a Trinity of personal Gods; for what he saw when heaven was opened to his vision was one personal God only, and the soul of Christ, "the Son of man" on the right, where any other might have stood; and no third person of the Godhead, though Stephen is said to have been full of the Holy Ghost.

"Son of God" and "Son of man" are terms that themselves are contradictory of certain assumptions. "Son" carries with it, by enforcement of language, the necessity of generation from a previously-existing being. Such a term is a denial of co-eternity or identity with that being. Twin-brother of God could alone have been expressive of our doctrine; and then there would be difficulties. If two beings existed for ever, and were of the same age, they are exactly *not* father and son.

"Son of man" was the favorite term Jesus used. How could this be if he were not a son of man? We are all sons of man. Son of the Holy Ghost alone would be proper, according to Luke's account; and it is negative of Luke's story that Jesus never so called himself. "Son of God" was not a term to distinguish him

from other men, because he gave the same title to all who became his disciples.

“My father and I are one” is an expression meaning accord, and not identity of person, as John xvii. 11 and 21 makes clear; for Jesus prays that his disciples may be one in the same way that he and his Father are one. Metaphorical expressions of this kind are so plentiful, that we need not multiply examples. The great truth stands above all metaphoric subtleties of interpretation, that Jesus himself never taught us nor his disciples what Athanasius wishes to add to his doctrine. Never did he say he was God. Never did he tell the story of his mother’s miraculous conception with the Holy Ghost. Never did he treat her with reverence, but with disrespect, which is itself denial. Never did he tell us nor them that there are three personal Gods; nor did his apostles ever teach such a doctrine. Who is Athanasius, or the majority vote of any council, that we set them above Christ himself?

THE GENERATION OF JESUS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

Two unlettered persons, Joseph the carpenter and Mary his wife, quarreled about Mary’s being found with child (by the Holy Ghost) before the proper time after the nuptials.

Her husband, a just man, decided to abandon her, but not to publicly expose her shame. She appears to have no excuse to offer.

Joseph had a dream after this, that an angel told him it was the work of the Holy Ghost, and therefore he should not fear to take his wife into favor again. There is here an anachronism; for the Holy Ghost was not known at that time. Joseph is addressed in his dream as son of David. It is said that Joseph had not, up to this time, any carnal intercourse with his wife, nor during the continuance of this pregnancy, — not till after the child was born.

The words import that they lived as man and wife afterward; but meantime they lived together Platonically. Jesus is her first-born child. The reason for this alleged abstinence from marital attention on Joseph's part was to fulfill an ancient prophecy that the mother of the Messiah should be a virgin.

As neither Joseph nor Mary knew of this when they married, they could not have behaved so unnaturally on that account. The allegation is incredible without some better explanation.

No plausible reason is given for Mary's keeping secret from her husband so important a fact as the honor God Almighty had conferred on her womb, and the object of it if she knew it. When we consider that they were poor work-people (confined to close quarters always), it is not credible that this strange and dangerous miracle to a married woman's honor could happen, and not be at once told to her husband, who must be informed some time if a child resulted, or be deceived in the other case. The story shows that it would not have been known so early had not her husband found it out. "She was found with child of the Holy Ghost," is our translation.

It is nowhere intimated that his wife, up to that time, was conscious of any miraculous deviation from the natural course.

The first idea of the matter was a dream Joseph is said to have had, in which an angel implies Mary's premature pregnancy, attributes it to the Holy Ghost, and hands over to Joseph's embrace the bride of the Holy Ghost. "Take unto thee the wife" means carnal commerce; but rather would he have been ordered to respect the sanctity of the womb, and to for ever hold it sacred from human desecration.

Joseph continues to dream, — four dreams in all; and Mary appears to the last to know of nothing extraordinary in regard to her condition, nor to the birth of her child, — neither from any angel direct, nor from any dream of her own, nor from her husband at second hand. The massacre of all the children in the country by Herod, to fulfill a supposed interpretation of ancient prophecy, is contrary to history, which could not have been silent on such an event, even if Herod had any such authority. And the traveling star that guided "the wise men" is not recorded by astronomers, nor by Luke, who tells quite a different story about it. Nowhere is any thing given of the awkwardness of allowing Mary to marry, instead of stopping off her marriage by more timely announcing the matter to her, and making her virginity less questionable, as well as saving mankind from unnecessary strain upon their powers of faith.

This strain becomes terrible when Matthew, while asking us to believe Joseph was not his father, asks us to believe that Jesus came to be a son of David by Joseph's being a lineal descendant from David. This seems to be a fatal discrepancy.

THE GENERATION OF JESUS ACCORDING TO LUKE.

Luke gives some particulars about the way Joseph's wife came to be pregnant.

A person, introducing himself as Gabriel to Elizabeth on an exactly similar occasion, presented himself to Joseph's wife in her apartments, and paid her compliments of so flattering a nature that she was alarmed. He desired her to quiet her fears, as he had only called to say that she had found favor with God, and she would have a son who would be *called* the son of the Most High, and God would give him the throne of *David* his *father*. Gabriel was informed by Mary that she and her husband were not in such intimacy as would make it possible. He told her that the Holy Ghost would come upon her ; and, upon this account, the child shall be *called* Son of God.

He told her that something of the same kind had also caused her superannuated cousin Elizabeth to be with child at this time. Mary gracefully replied that she hoped it would be as he said ; and Gabriel departed.

Luke sends Mary away at once, and keeps her for three months away from Joseph at Elizabeth's home.

Joseph never knew any thing about this Gabriel matter, never had any misgivings about its being his child in the natural course. He and his wife were living affectionately together after her return from the visit ; and the text shows that they registered the child at the circumcision as Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, as required by the law.

“The parents” (xi. 27 and xi. 41), “Joseph and his mother” (xi. 33 and xi. 43), in our translation, are, in the original, according to Griesbach and Le Maistre de Sacy, translation of 1672, and many others, “his father and mother.”

He was certainly not registered, as we now register him, as the Son of God and Mary, or Son of the Holy Ghost and Mary, in any Jewish temple. The priest is represented as saying many complimentary things, — which the parents, however, did not get any sense from, — but not a word about his being God, or second person of a Trinity of Gods. Yet this priest is said to have a revelation from God about it, and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Neither he nor any one else at that time knew any thing but unity of God.

Here was a fitting time for the annunciation of the Trinity, and for the proclamation that the child was no son of Joseph and no son of David. Here was an occasion where the high-priest must have declined to put “the mother of God” through the purification and the sacrificial ceremonies required by the law when the child has a Jewish father; and the uncleanness attaching in such case can not be predicated of the miraculous conception of the birth of a God.

That the writer of the first two chapters of Luke had no idea of the Holy Ghost’s agency with Joseph’s wife being construed as generating a Deity incarnate may be seen by the story about Elizabeth and John Baptist and Zacharias. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost. Elizabeth had the Holy Ghost introduced into her womb; and John, her baby, was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb. Evidently the same

process is intended to be described in both cases. Zacharias was incredulous, like Mary, alleging, as she did, physical improbability in the way. In Zacharias's case (i. 13), it is evident that Nature took its course ; and it is to be inferred that the writer intended the same in Joseph's case. The agency of the Holy Ghost would be quite out of place for engendering a male and mortal body, when it is shown, that, to invest a mortal child with the Holy Ghost had no need of such infraction of the law of human generation.

It is not a little singular, that, while Gabriel was delicate enough to address the husband of Elizabeth on such a matter, he should go to Mary instead of her husband in a like case. It was more particularly due to Mary that Joseph should have been first informed of the matter. It proved also a blunder ; for it brought trouble and disgrace upon Mary ; and, after all, the angel was obliged to make an extra visit to Joseph in a dream to heal the breach made by his first impolitic management.

MATTHEW AND LUKE COMPARED.

If Matthew's gospel antedates Luke's, Luke includes it among the many gospels that were extant when he wrote. Luke intimates that he wrote to give his friend Theophilus more reliable history than he could gather from existing Gospels.

Having Matthew before him, he would have attested Matthew's history if he had believed it true, or found it satisfactory for faith.

Luke ignores, and in fact denies by rejecting, the following stories given by Matthew : —

1st. That Joseph descended from David through Solomon, and that Matthew was his grandfather, and Jacob his father.

2d. That Joseph accused his wife of infidelity, and resolved to drive her away.

3d. That Joseph was induced by a dream to believe her untimely pregnancy was the work of the Holy Ghost.

4th. That the angel told Joseph it would be a son, and he must name him Jesus, because he will save his people, and deliver them from their sins.

5th. That all this was done to fulfill a prophecy, that his mother should be a virgin, and his name should be Emmanuel.

6th. That Joseph abstained from commerce with his wife till after the child was born.

7th. The story of the wise men giving rich presents to the babe, of the special star sent to guide them, of its being a house (and not a stable) where Mary and her child were, and of the birth at Bethlehem being according to a prophecy quoted ; also of their having an angelic dream, directing them to return by a different road.

8th. That Joseph dreamed again that he must fly into Egypt, and stay there with the child until ordered by the angel to return ; and that he went to Egypt in order to fulfill the prophecy quoted. Luke ignores the whole story about the flight into Egypt.

9th. That Herod massacred all the children in the

country of two years old and under, to fulfill another quoted prophecy.

10th. That Joseph had a third dream, and a fourth dream countermanding the third.

11th. That instead of returning to Bethlehem, where Matthew evidently fixes their native residence, they went to live at Nazareth, to fulfill a prophecy quoted.

Wherever Luke got his version, it is to be presumed Matthew had knowledge of the same stories, but did not consider them reliable, or as calculated to help Christianity. Matthew therefore denies and repudiates the following stories given by Luke, as collected from various sources, and believed by him reliable, and as part of Christian gospel.

1st. The whole story about John Baptist's being miraculously generated by barren and superannuated parents; of an angel's visit to the father (whose salutation, "Fear not," is the same as Matthew's angel makes to Joseph, and Luke's angel to Mary) with the announcement that John will be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; that the father did not believe the angel, and was punished by being struck dumb; that the angel said his name was Gabriel.

2d. That this same angel appeared, not to Joseph in a dream, but awake to Mary at her house in Nazareth, and told her she would have a child, and that she should name him Jesus; that he shall be called Son of the Most High, and shall be King of Israel; that Mary doubted the angel's words on physical grounds.

3d. That the angel described the process of genera-

tion, and alleged the reason why the child should be called the Son of God, viz., because of the agency of the Holy Ghost in the matter.

4th. That when the mother of John, then *enciente*, heard Mary's voice, the babe leaped in her womb for joy, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost.*

5th. Then follow eleven verses of poetic exaltation, which, if uttered by an unlettered woman like Mary, we must set down as a miracle. Matthew ignores it.

6th. That Joseph and Mary were taken to Bethlehem by a Roman decree to register themselves under a Jewish sacerdotal requisition as man and wife, because Joseph was of the house of David. Here Mary was confined (in a stable; for they used a manger for a bed, there being no room in the public house").

7th. That they were (poor) shepherds in the field at night, and not wealthy sages, to whom the birth was announced; that, instead of a star, it was an angel and a multitude of the heavenly host, and a verbal announcement; but no rich presents, and no adoration, and no angelic dream giving directions about their return.

8th. Matthew ignores, as gospel, Luke's account of the circumcision; the purification; presentation of Jesus to the Lord at Jerusalem; the revelation from the Holy Ghost to Simeon; the presentation of Jesus to Simeon by his father and mother, desiring the customary ceremonies of the law of Moses, which were only accorded to the children of Jewish fathers; the poetic address of

* We have here a process of filling a foetus *in utero* with the Holy Ghost, after it had been formed by ordinary human process; and an evidence that the child did not, on account of being thus created by the Holy Ghost, become a Son of God in the sense Athanasius gives it.

Simeon, and the great things that he prophesied of their child, which were beyond the comprehension of his father and mother.

9th. The story of the talent shown at twelve years of age ; of Mary's first upbraiding him for straying, and giving his father and mother trouble ; of his excuse that he was about his Father's business, and of their not understanding what he meant by "his Father's business," apparently a spiritual expression, — all are ignored by Matthew.

10th. The genealogy by Luke is not given in the first two chapters. Evidently Luke and Matthew found two genealogies. Paul speaks of there being many, causing great dissensions. While Matthew makes Joseph, the father of Jesus, a descendant of David through Solomon, Luke traces his ancestry through Nathan, but in both making out that Jesus came from the loins of David through Joseph. It is clear that they agree that he was Joseph's son by natural birth, else why give Joseph's pedigree at all ?

It is noteworthy, in all this review, that none of the parties concerned speak of or hint that the baby was to be, or was, a God incarnate, that he was a second person among three personal Gods, or that the Holy Ghost was a Godhead.

Considering that all parties were Jews, knowing nothing of a Trinity, and having no such idea of Holy Ghost, and that, when Mary was being informed by an angel, the whole truth should reasonably be expected to be explained to her ; and considering, that, to save the child's life, it was necessary to fly into Egypt, as if there

was nothing miraculous in his nature ; considering that Jesus himself never spoke of his miraculous conception, nor of a trinity of Gods, of whom he was one, as we should expect to have announced in plain and intelligible language ; and considering that two of his evangelists ignore the miraculous conception, and that the other two give fragmentary, inconsistent, vague, and irreconcilable histories, legendary in their character ; and also that ecclesiastical historians doubt that Luke's original had any part of the history preceding the beginning of Christ's ministry ; — considering all these things, and the general unbelief, it seems as if prudence would justify us in relieving the Christian conscience from compulsory belief in the present dogma of the miraculous corporeal generation of Jesus ; which would in no way lessen our belief in his divine mission, nor detract from the self-convincing beauty and power of his doctrine.

We put it to all true Christians to say if it does not involve great improbabilities, when a historian tells wonderful things of a man's infancy, and great wisdom at twelve years of age, and yet shows that he knows nothing of this man from twelve to thirty years of age.

That the miraculous powers of such a person, having such a mission, should lie so idle and unproductive for thirty years, that they who knew all about him from the beginning could find nothing to record, passes all credibility. It comes very nearly to a proof that the historians knew nothing of him until the beginning of his ministry at thirty years of age.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW.

“Men put not new wine into old bottles, lest the old flavor spoil the new.”

Nothing has so much contributed to the evils of dissension in Christianity as the task it assumed to carry along with it the religion of Moses. As many highly important and contradictory differences exist between them, and as our religion stands in no need of its help, but gets from it only embarrassment, we feel confident, that whenever the increasing intelligence of the world shall call for a corrective review of the Christian doctrines, to bring it back to primitive Christianity, from which it has strayed, the first movement in the reform will be to cut loose from the whole religion of Moses, and pronounce Christianity perfect in itself.

We are not going to constitute ourselves judges of the claim which Moses (unlike our evangelists) makes to having received his religion by revelation from God himself. Happily, Jesus, the founder of our faith, has himself pronounced upon that question a judgment so very clear and unmistakable, that we are left in wonder, that, while we have strained at every text to make doctrine, this solemn adjudication against the claim of Moses seems to have been hushed. Harken to the judgment of Christ! Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, take life for life, love your friends, and hate your enemies. [Revelation of God according to Moses.] But I say unto you, nay, revenge not, return good for evil, love your enemies as your friends. . [Revelation of God according to Jesus.]

Is not here a direct and unqualified condemnation of the religion of Moses (if false in one, false in all), and a denial that it was ever revealed to him of God? Here are two religions, as opposite in their essence as God and Demon. Is it not a mocking of reason, and an offense to the understanding, to attempt to reconcile them? Can we pretend that God has changed his mind, and, at a sudden thought, reversed his moral law? that the moment Jesus pronounced this revelation, the bitter, savage, and most ungodlike law of Moses was the actual and the true law of God, for this world, and all the worlds of space, and for the heavens, whence his laws come? and that, sudden and unwarned, the next moment, the most opposite and contradictory law, condemning the former as a mistake, issued from the mouth of the same God with whom a thousand years are as one day, and whose law is unchangeable and everlasting?

Many of the most learned and devout Christians can not reconcile the God of Moses with the Trinitarian Deity of our religion.

Moses claims to have the fullest revelation from God, besides having been favored with actually seeing him “face to face, as a man sees his friend.” The God he saw was not a Trinity, but a Unity, particularly jealous of all pretensions to having equals.

The God Moses saw was not three persons, but only one person.

Now, Moses knew all about the Egyptian trinity; for it was an Egyptian doctrine, and is clear that he taught Unity in opposition to it. If there be a Trinity of Gods, or any thing of the kind, and this truth was concealed

or withheld from Moses, the truth was not revealed to him, nor did he at all see the God we worship. This would confirm the judgment of Jesus, already quoted against Moses. Among the errors of Moses, he did not mention the Unity and single personality, because he did not himself teach the Trinity of personal Gods which opposes it.

If we look into the Epistles, we find that St. Paul made a powerful effort to cut loose from the whole dead weight of the Mosaic law ; rather letting the Jews go, and preaching only to Gentiles. He warned the Church, that, if it retained any one part of the law, it would be bound to the whole law. Peter was condemned by Paul for cumbering Christianity with Jewish doctrines.

The devout Christian philosopher, in accepting Jesus, sees that he must accept his condemnation of Moses. He can not be a Jew, and hate his enemies, and at the same time be a Christian, and love them.

DO ANCIENT METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATIONS JUSTIFY REVIEW BY MODERN INTELLIGENCE?

We have thus presented sufficient evidence from the Scriptures of our religion to show that there is reasonable justification for the review of dogmas which this age does not find acceptable, and which grow more and more in doubt and unbelief as educated reason investigates them.

Is it the part of wisdom for the Church to lead in this

matter? The public would be content to accept from the Church such safe installments of correction as would not endanger it. If the host of enlightened and quickened minds now coming amongst us, with the natural craving for a religious faith which will commend itself to general belief instead of general infidelity, be driven to help themselves, there would be results more radical than convenient. We were educated in the strictest school of theology. Our counsel is in the interest of the Church, and for the good of souls. There is one marked instance of abandonment by the Church of a dogma that has outgrown belief, to show that the Church has done such things before.

Hell, as a literal place of physical and eternal torment, and as a final winding-up of "our Father's mercy and loving-kindness to his children," had become so repugnant to general belief, that it has been tacitly dropped by the general pulpit of Christianity; while in our early life it formed the chief staple of our sermons. The Church might have saved itself from the violent revolution of Luther, and the slave States of America from ruin, by timely and moderate conception of vested rights to the clearly-marked requirements of enlightened progress.

Let us not deceive ourselves: the miraculous march of progress will brook no obstacle; and the institution that resists it will court its own destruction.

“COURTS OF CONCILIATION.”

In Paris, Courts of Conciliation are established by law, and a majority of the differences between tradesmen and mechanics are settled at one sitting. The loss of our note-book by theft, at the fire of the Cosmopolitan Hotel, San Francisco, obliges us to quote from memory. We believe that four-fifths of all the cases are settled thus amicably ; and, when appeal is made to other courts, the decisions are seldom reversed.

It works this way in practice. The judges are retired men of long experience in trade. In a number of cases that we were permitted to hear, the contestants, without lawyers, witnesses, or oaths, stated their cases respectively, as a preliminary hearing. In most cases, the judge quickly discovered which party was wrong in his notions. In this case, he requested the other party to withdraw. Then he explained to the litigant the point of error, assured him he could not gain by going to more open litigation, and advised making terms with the opponent. In most of the cases, this preliminary became a final settlement : in very few cases, a re-hearing and witnesses were called for.

Here is a lesson from which our religious and other societies may take example,

If any religious society desires to surpass its rivals by doing good, by promoting harmony, and suppressing the evils of litigation, and its attendant animosity and uncharitableness, let it bind its members to this means of adjudicating and atoning differences. Let them dis-

card law-books, and refer, as the Mohammedans do, to their Bible. In Christian Bibles, and in all others except that of the Jews, there is one law for all, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you ;" and it is not doubted, that, as in Paris, competent men can be found to discern wisely the just application of that law of conciliation.

MIRACLES.

"Signs and miracles diminish the merit of faith. It is servile homage that is paid to a doctrine on account of miracles. The free spirit surrenders only to the intrinsic force of truth." — MOHAMMED.

By reference to Exodus vii. and viii., it will be seen that there was an organized institution in Egypt, as in Hindostan, for instruction in the science of performing miracles in order to prove religious profession. The professors were called magicians.

The Mosaic record gives us a curious illustration of their power to work miracles. Moses was well versed in Egyptian science. In order to convince Pharaoh that the God of Moses was superior to the God of Egypt, the Almighty told Moses that Aaron should throw down his rod before the monarch, and it should become a serpent.

But the magicians threw down many rods, and turned them also into serpents. Upon being informed of this failure, the Almighty sent him back to do another miracle, viz., to turn the waters of the river into blood, and kill the fish. But this miracle the magicians also did. A third time, God sent him back to cover the

land and the interior of the houses with frogs. But again the magicians matched the miracle exactly! Though Aaron is said to have beaten the magicians at last upon a lesser kind of performance, the account is not calculated to exalt our faith in miracles as a proof of any religion; rather it makes us inclined the more to make it a test, that a religion shall be self-convincing, and above the aid of such questionable support from without.

Devout philosophers make so many startling objections to miracles, that a great deal of infidelity grows out of the supposition that the truth of the doctrines of Christianity rests upon the proof the recorded miracles supply.

We hold this to be a great mistake. The truths of Christianity are sufficiently palpable to stand without aid of revelation or miracle. If this were not so, they would exhibit a point of weakness and insufficiency inconsistent with the character of everlasting truth.

A miracle or a revelation may bring conviction of what, from its improbability, may require such means of proof; but its purpose ends with the person for whom it is done. If other persons are to be convinced, the same reason that made it necessary to do a miracle to enforce conviction of something incredible on the first person, makes it equally necessary for all others. And they should require it, because it has been pronounced of a nature not to be believed without.

It must be considered that there is an immense difference between seeing a miracle performed, and hearing that some one else is said to have seen it. Even if we find a person who himself avers that he saw a miracle,

and we believe he is honest, we should think it necessary to make very minute investigation to satisfy ourselves that he may not have been mistaken. A miracle to Peter and other disciples, we hear, was no miracle to Thomas. We hear of wonders and soothsayings now-a-days ; but, because they want antiquity, we smile incredulously : yet there is less reason to believe, just in proportion as antiquity removes them from notation.

Suppose, however, we believe a man was present when he understood, or supposed he saw another, convert water into wine. Nothing else is proved by it than that single fact ; especially if nothing is alleged as its purpose but to give some feasters more drink.

The miracles of the New Testament, however, are not stated as facts by the writers who incorporate them in their narratives ; but, as Luke says, they are given by some persons not named, who received them from some other persons also unnamed, as having been seen by some other persons also not named.

Really our religion is competent to stand without the support of this kind of propping ; and we put it to all intelligent Christians whether it is prudent to quarrel with our neighbor about such a matter, or to refuse him religious fellowship because he believes in the doctrines of Christ on account of their purity and high morality alone.

The best way to make believers numerous, and to thin the ranks of infidelity, is to lop off from the requirements of faith whatever is not necessary to gain this desideratum. We may well sacrifice every non-essential doctrine, and concentrate our faith all the more securely on the rest.

To awaken an interest for searching the Scriptures, and to enable the reader to meet the doubts of others, we will state some objections to miracles.

Inasmuch as every religious founder before the time of Christ relied upon miracles to prove his mission (always including a miraculous conception by a virgin), many pious Christians of every age of the Church have doubted that Jesus ever thus resorted to so close an imitation of known impostors. They have been obliged to consider these imitations as additions by his zealous biographers, who, comprehending the self-convincing power of his simple but sublime truths, conceived it would help the progress of Christian teaching to sprinkle it with the usual miracles. The character of Christ seems to many of his most devout admirers to be more homogeneous and consistent in the simplicity which was its leading attraction without miracles or metaphysicalities.

Had he been reliant upon miracles to prove that his mission was from God, it is hard to reconcile our reason—it may be said incredible—to the striking fact, that he never once brought forward, nor mentioned, nor dropped a hint of, the first and greatest and most astounding miracle that first ushered him into the world,—his miraculous generation by the Holy Ghost in the body of a married woman. This alone would have sufficed for universal conviction without another miracle. His mother was about; but she was also silent on this great miracle: never a word escaped her lips on that subject to help her son's mission. This fairly established a sound presumption that he was not a man for miracles; but that rather he considered his re-

ligion as above the need of miracles. On the contrary, when asked to perform them for this purpose, he refused, saying, because they would not believe without, they should not have a miracle. It appears, indeed, in keeping with this declaration, that some of the miracles he did were performed for the gratification only of his followers who were already attached. The wine-miracle is an instance, all present being friends at a neighbor's festive-board.

If miracles were intended to make believers, it is reasonable to expect that they would be done so openly as to make the greatest number of believers; and the witnesses would have been selected calculated to give them greatest weight of testimony.

This was far from being the case. The brothers of Jesus upbraided him for the secrecy of his alleged miracles, while he claimed to desire to be known openly. John vii. 3 and 5.

In nothing do the evangelists show uncertainty so great as in their collections of miracles. Besides discrepancies in the details of those they unite in presenting as evidences of the mission of Christ, each presents some which are not indorsed by others, and therefore (we presume) not sufficiently authentic, or, at any rate, not essential in his opinion as evidences of Christianity. John, for instance, presents at least six miracles (including the converting of water into wine, which he says was the first miracle, and raising Lazarus from the dead), which no other Gospel presents for our belief. In return, he does not indorse as gospel necessary to Christianity many more miracles of the others than they reject of his, including the miraculous con-

ception story from beginning to end (in which rejection Mark joins him) ; the second miraculous feeding of four thousand persons (in which rejection Luke joins him) ; and the transfiguration, at which the others say John was present. This is more probably proof that John the evangelist was not John the disciple.

The conclusion is warranted, that there was not such accord on the credibility of the miracles as to place them in the first class of evidences. If all four of the historians take the liberty of omitting some as not essential, at least may not we be tolerant, each of his neighbor, and permit selection and rejection of any or all that are not deemed essential to our faith?

EVIDENCES OF MIRACLES.

Our Gospels are but one part of the records of our religion. The same church which hands them down to us supplies us with a long chain of testimony regarding miracles, which are much better attested by actual vouchers who saw them. We have collected a few examples for instruction.

As miracles thus form a continued chain of Christian evidences, vouched for by the Church, we can not select a few at the farthest end, which we can see the least clearly, and pronounce them only genuine because of their antiquity, and all the rest forgeries.

Dr. Whitby, in examining the history of early Christian evidences, says, "It is very remarkable that Papias A.D. 110, and Irenæus A.D. 167, the two earliest fathers,

have, on the credit of two idle reports, shamefully imposed upon us forgeries of false stories regarding things said and done by the apostles." Thus near the fountain-head the stream becomes muddy.

St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (A.D. 368), declares, that, in imitation of the miracle of Cana in Galilee, several fountains and rivers in his day were annually converted into wine ; and that he himself drank of them.

St. Chrysostom (A.D. 398) supplies books full of miracles wrought by the relics of dead saints.

St. Jerome (A.D. 378) indorses St. Epiphanius, and defends the pious zeal of some whose miracles were exposed.

St. Athanasius (326), to whom is attributed by Unitarian Christians the discovery of the Trinity, vouches for the following: "The Devil called on St. Anthony the monk, to beg that the monks would not curse him as they had done ; because, since the increase of monasteries, and the spread of Christianity, his power was entirely taken away," &c. The life of Anthony is full of miracles.

St. Gregory (A.D. 370) of Nyssa says the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist appeared to Gregory Nazianzene (famous for miracles), and gave him a divine creed in which the Trinity was declared. This creed was written by the ghost of John, and was then preserved in Gregory's church.

St. Austin (A.D. 396) leaves records of miracles by relics of saints that would fill an ordinary wheelbarrow.

Gregory Nazianzene, St. Ambrosius, Lactantius, and Tertullian, all refer to the story of the fabulous phoenix having risen as proof of the resurrection.

The Church of Smyrna sent a circular to all the churches, giving an account to be strictly relied upon of the events connected with the martyrdom of Polycarp (before 100). A voice from the clouds called to the saint to be firm. The fire formed an arch over him, and would not burn him. The executioner then thrust his sword in his side, from which sprang a dove, and a flow of blood that extinguished the fire, &c. The narrative ends abruptly by announcing, that at last the fire performed its functions, and the saint expired. This is one of the best authenticated miracles.

Casting out devils had got to be so common at every street-corner, by heathens as well as Christians, that the Council of Laodicea (367) put a stop to it as bringing religion into contempt.

Justin Martyr (A.D. 140), Cyprian (248), Amobius (303), Eusebius (315), Theodoret (425), may be added to the lists of saints who have left us evidence of any quantity of further miracles.

St. Austin says, "on the authority of credible persons," that St. John the apostle having always affirmed that Jesus promised him that he should not die until he had seen the second coming of Christ, his disciples affirmed, that, when John was buried, the ground kept rising and falling over the body as it breathed for a long period.

The miracle of the cross of Constantine "was seen by the whole army." From that time until Luther, every Christian historian records oracles, prodigies, and miracles with the greatest attestations.

The King's Evil. — History records, that, from A.D. 1660 to 1680, 92,107 persons afflicted with this disease were touched by Charles II., and cured miraculously.

The king laid his hands on the sick, and said, "I touch : God heal ;" while the chaplain read the text, — "He put his hands upon them, and he healed them."

The miracles of the Abbé de Paris in the seventeenth century were attested by the sworn signatures of thousands. He died in 1725. The government became alarmed at the multitudes that crowded his tomb giving sworn certificates of miraculous cures ; and the tomb was walled in.

Montegeron published a large quarto volume of these well-attested miracles. He dedicated it to the king, who received it from his hands with due ceremony. The same author made out three volumes more of miracles, with vouchers and affidavits annexed.

The truth of the miracles, and the conversions effected, were attested by many eye-witnesses, by the principal physicians of France, by the highest clergy ; and a *procès verbal*, certified by over twenty curés of parishes in Paris, was regularly presented to the archbishops, that they might be registered as lasting evidences, and be solemnly published as miracles placed beyond doubt or denial for the benefit of the faithful . and for the confirmation of religion.

If, on such testimony as the Church transmits through the Gospels, we believe the ancient miracles, how can we refuse credit to such testimony as we can thus almost lay our fingers on?

Yet we smile at these so well-attested miracles for the very reason that they are too near for belief.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

The existence of witches, or persons possessed of

demons in the last century, is proved by evidence of courts, judges, lawyers, jurists, priests, and by the oaths of thousands of respectable witnesses at Salem, Mass., by the legislators who made laws to punish them ; and yet, now-a-days, every man knows that it was an illusion which overcame a whole people, and frenzied them to a pitch that led multitudes to look with pious satisfaction on the burning of innocent women as witches, which the Bible taught them to believe in.

To this day the Catholic Church continues to add new links to the long chain of miracles.

The blood of St. Januarius. — We have seen this affair, and can describe it.

The head of this saint and martyr is deposited in a silver half-statue, richly gilt ; and the two phials containing his congealed blood are enclosed in a separate tabernacle of white marble in the chapel of Il Teseno at Naples. The phials are sealed, and immovably fixed in a beautiful ostensorium. The keys are kept, — one by the Bishop of Naples, the other by a deputation of nobles, per agreement made in the time of Innocent X. The officiating priest appeals to the saint ; and, if the reply is favorable, the saint indicates it by liquefying his blood. To satisfy unbelievers, a public examination was invited Aug. 21, 1754, by the cardinal archbishop of Naples. All the authorities of the cathedral, some thousands of persons, and a deputation of twelve nobles, attended. And the miracle was attested by the oaths of all these high personages, and of a large number of persons eminent for their piety, and known to the world:

This miracle has been performed annually since, and

similarly attested. When Napoleon I. was in Naples, the priests gave out that St. Januarius was against him. He is said to have sent them word that "if the saint will not liquefy his blood, I will dry up yours." This is said to have produced a miraculous liquefaction. The secret is probably a chemical substance, which, by a moderate application of heat, becomes fluid; and the justification is, that miracles revive and strengthen faith.

Though thus attested by so much more convincing evidence than those of our antiquity, no Christian outside the Catholic Church gives faith to these miracles, because they are not mouldy enough: they are only modern stuff.

To supply the miracles for a new religion, so far from being difficult, is the easiest part of all. Mohammed never pretended to miracles. Like Jesus, he trusted to the intrinsic superiority of his doctrines. Both of them clearly thus expressed themselves. Neither of them left any written gospels.

The followers of Mohammed, in writing his gospels, supplied a stuffing of miracles, under the impression that these would help them to win converts in the absence of that talent and magnetic power of address which inspired their great master. And the earliest writers of Christianity, as well as later ecclesiastical historians, say that they only followed our example.

HOW A MIRACLE GAINS REPORT

“ The flying rumors gathered as they rolled.
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told,
And all who told it added something new ;
And all who heard it added something too.
On every ear it spread ; on every ear it grew.”

John iv. 29 furnishes an example of the exaggerations of such reporters as Luke says he is indebted to for his gospel records. We see how vast are the proportions a miracle attains in the very first hands, and how the fiction avails for the credulous multitude.

At the great gathering-place of the gossipers (in ancient as in modern times), — a village well, — a Samaritan woman, who had lived with five husbands, and was then mistress to a sixth man, was drawing water as usual. If such a woman's history was not known to every one in that neighborhood, it will form a singular exception to a universal law. Jesus asked her to call her husband. She said she had none. Then Jesus said he knew the man was not her lawful husband, and he also knew that she had five husbands in her time. She said, “ Sir, I perceive you are a prophet.” Nothing in his reply indicates that he spoke from any miraculous knowledge on a matter of certainly public notoriety. But the woman went forth with a big story: “ Come see a man that told me all things which ever I did. Is not this the Christ ? ” And many believed him for this saying of the woman: “ He told me all things that ever I did ” (v. 39).

This instance warrants the application to every miracle that is of record ; for human nature is ever the same. It is a law of humanity to make a marvel of what it can, and to give it coloring on every new rehearsal. Here is a dubious miracle believed on the mere word of an abandoned woman. But we have also, among many, an instance in which Jesus was misunderstood, and not understood at all ; a marked instance in which the apostles themselves, in their usual misapprehension, spread about a misrepresentation of the freshly-uttered words of their Master (John xxi. 23).

These examples are sufficient to show that reason and the rules of evidence should accompany investigation in religion as well as in all other directions.

ANALYSIS OF A MIRACLE.

We speak of miracles so lightly, that it may serve to give us a new and richer appreciation if we examine in detail the atomic elements that are required to make up the structure of one.

Let us take one of the few miracles which the four evangelists unite in recording, — the five loaves and five fishes, and the about five thousand persons that were fed, and the “besides women and children” of Matthew.

It may be noted that the expressed object of this great compound mass of miracles, usually regarded as a single performance, was not to prove any doctrine, but to feed the people.

Nor was there urgency for it on that score ; because,

1st, The disciples intimated that there was food enough in the neighborhood, and, if the people were dismissed, they would provide themselves with it. 2dly, They would not have suffered much by the privation of a single meal till they could reach their homes.

It will be thought not unreasonable to expect that so stupendous an exercise of power, which required a disturbance of the laws of the universe (established to govern all reproduction of living forms), would only be resorted to on occasions of momentous urgency, beyond the reach of natural means of relief.

We shall run into trouble if we assume, that, while there was plenty of natural food around, God began a new *extempore* creation; for our faith is pledged to believe that work was determinately finished and perfected long time ago, and that to the fish was assigned the duty and the power of reproducing their species. It is not to be presumed that they had failed in this duty, that fish were not existing in plenty. But it is to be understood by the terms of the narrative that the fish thus formed by a new act of creation were exactly the same kind as those already on hand, and not any new kind; that is, natural fish made by unnatural means, which involves an awkward contradiction to the philosophic mind.

It is easy to say he *multiplied* so many loaves from five, and so many fishes from two small ones; say one thousand and three thousand respectively. But, resolve it in any way possible, it comes to this, that neither the five loaves nor the two fishes could in the least contribute to produce any other loaves or fishes (as the story seems to intimate); for the lifeless elements in

their composition were necessarily bound up in their own existence. These *multiplied* loaves and fishes must, then, have been an entirely new creation; or they must have been obtained from supplies existing somewhere.

As the narrative reads, both the loaves and the fishes were in a state for immediate eating; that is, cooked in whatever form.

Now, a creation of living fish and plants we have reconciled our minds to; but a new creation of dead, drawn, and ready-cooked fishes, makes exorbitant demands upon human reasoning. Then we have twelve baskets of *miraculous rubbish!* surplus and waste of miraculous manufacture; not needful for the alleged purpose, and of no value beyond the refuse of the natural loaves and fishes with which it was indiscriminately mixed up, and not esteemed enough to be eagerly seized and preserved as sacred memorials by the communicants. Nor did it seem that any one cared to get the miraculous in preference to the natural loaves and fishes.

Surely, if such astounding a mass of miracles were enacted by Heaven, or by man or demon, before any five thousand men of this age, besides women and children, not only would there have been no fragments, but there would have been a struggle for relics, of such terrible proportions as would have left not a vestige to be gleaned. And no secular historian could have possibly omitted it from his records, as they all do.

Had it not been for the fragments recorded, we might have supposed that the fishes miraculously made were so far unlike the natural as to have no heads or bones, scales, teeth, entrails, eyes, fins, brains, tails, and so

forth ; because these are only essential to living fish, while for feeding men they are the reverse of useful.

After the manner of human judgment (and that is what is appealed to), the miracle would have been more perfect for the purpose if the meat of fish had been created without the rubbish annexed ; for it looks too like what is natural.

If, to escape these difficulties, we suppose the fish came up miraculously from the sea, and suddenly cooked themselves, and the loaves came from the granaries of some dealers, and ground and baked themselves, or were taken from the baker's ovens, we shall emasculate the miracle, and reduce it to a poetical account of a natural process, as Moses striking the rock for water is rendered by many commentators.

Had we designed a miracle which should be most convincing, instead of least striking, we should have created something new to them ; something not plenty thereabouts at least. Fish was only too common. The lake at their feet was full of such fish ; and the friends around him were fishermen, from whom they got fish every day, just like those produced on this occasion. Then there appears to have been plenty of fish-baskets up on that mountain, and some had fish in when they went up. How came any there, if they were not carried up hill ? Evidently they were full. And it is equally evident that the narrators err in saying that twelve baskets sufficed to hold the fragments of a meal for five thousand men, besides women and children, so that nothing was lost.

We suggest that some unknown meat and fruit, and wheaten bread, would have better answered, instead of

familiar every-day barley loaves and fishes, so like natural as to have no appearance of being miraculous, and no refuse miraculous waste, so like the waste of common stuff.

We have a guide to correct the numbers said to be entertained. The disciples said that two hundred pennies' worth of bread would feed all there were. A penny went far, doubtless, in those days ; but we should not suppose far enough to feed five thousand besides women and children, say six thousand mouths, equal to one-thirtieth of a penny each.

It is noteworthy, that, whenever this miracle is referred to afterwards, it is only claimed for the loaves, and not the fishes. There is an apparent rehearsal of this miracle, but claimed to be a second miracle, and only given by two evangelists.

The other loaves-and-fishes miracles (Mark viii., and Matthew xv. 32, not indorsed by Luke nor John) says the multitude was about four thousand ; " besides women and children " being added by the same evangelist who adds it to the first loaf-and-fish miracle.

And it is stated that this multitude had been with him three days in the wilderness without any food, and, of course, without shelter.

This but adds another mountain of improbability ; and, if we admit women and children, the story becomes quite incredible.

Immediately after this miracle, as in the former, these two evangelists sent Jesus and his disciples into a ship ; one sending him to Magdala, the other to Dalmanutha.

AN EVER-LIVING MIRACLE.

It is not only a doctrine of the Old and New Testament, but a well-established fact in science, that one of the most powerful agents of Providence is moral delusion.

History abounds in instances of great national delusions ; and we have thousands of instances in our medical books of individual hallucination, where sincerity was not questioned. Men of known purity of life have fancied that they were Jesus Christ, that they were sent to save his religion from corruption, that they saw miracles, and had converse with God.

Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, no doubt truly believed in all he described touching his visit to heaven. The purity of his life, the wisdom of his moral instruction, and the success of his religion in promoting piety and good works, give us every reason to credit his sincerity. The same reason applies to the vision of Paul. His disturbed mind may have been converted by the effects of what to other persons was a thunder-storm : as we are informed in the Testament, that on an occasion the people were divided ; some hearing a voice, while others only heard ordinary thunder. So, upon many other occasions, some saw a miracle, some doubted, and some saw that there was nothing miraculous. " They did not consider the miracle of the loaves." This doubt is so often repeated, the brothers of Jesus and the disciples themselves being also unbelieving, that we are disposed to bring it within the established law

(which saves us from the objection of violation of the fixed laws) by assuming, that, *belief* in miracles being alone sufficient, a delusion may have been sent instead of a miracle. Certainly it is not miracles, but only a belief in them, that has been used for eighteen hundred years for the establishment of Christianity. And if this belief of some, while other spectators doubted, and some again denied, has proved sufficient for the purpose of future millions, whether the parties believing, or those who disbelieved, were the more correct, is a matter of no real consequence. For reasoning minds, the great moral doctrines have always been their own sufficient witnesses; while for unreasoning people, who can only be dominated by supernatural proofs, which now-a-days are not given, it is an economic arrangement, and full of wisdom, that easy faith is sent to the lowly, to believe that miracles were done for others long ago, and to be content not to ask for the same actual proof for themselves; that though miracles formed a necessary element of the first growth of Christianity, nevertheless Christianity went on growing after dropping this one active element for ever out of its composition.

This singular divorce of its original elements, itself miraculous as any thing recorded, would not be necessitated, if we adopt the assumption that the easy belief of supernatural things for the unthinking was an original element of its first composition and growth, and has been consistently a part of its nature ever since; growing ever with its growth from the first.

To the philosophic mind, the miracles we have handed down to us are nothing in the balance, compared

with the miraculous credulity they command from millions, who, on such evidence, would not admit a temporal claim of sixpence on their purse; nor would any court, or any judge, or any jury enforce it. But as it only concerns their souls and their eternal welfare, their salvation from spiritual ruin, they give it easy faith, and do not care to look into it for themselves. The miracle is doubled when we see credulity persecuting others for not believing, because their enlightened faith in Christ's doctrines has no need of long-ago miracles done to convince an ignorant people, who could not appreciate their intrinsic excellence.

The greater the delusion, the greater the miracle, and the more we have to admire this economical contrivance of Providence for the moral government of mankind in the ages of general ignorance and superstitious requirements.

This intelligent age is capable of appreciating the doctrines of Christ much better if they are put upon their intrinsic excellence alone. To sound minds, it is casting doubt to proffer miraculous stories in proof of what proves itself. It is offering to gild our golden guineas. It only raises suspicion of their intrinsic value.

Instead of ruling out of Christian fellowship those who reject the miracles, as to them an obstacle instead of an aid to faith, let us award a higher merit to that faith which accepts the words of our Saviour, asking no miracle to give assurance of their truth before acceptance.

MIRACLES, ACCORDING TO THE EVIDENCES OF
THE GOSPELS, OF CHRIST HIMSELF AND HIS
DISCIPLES DURING HIS LIFETIME, AND BY THE
APOSTLES AFTERWARDS.

The Gospels record repeated instances of the failure of miracles to convert the people for whom they were performed. John felt called upon to make an apology or explanation of this singular waste of miracle power, and for the unsatisfactory verdict of the spectators in condemnation of the performances, as being (we must infer) no miracles.

His excuse is, however, really very awkward. He says that their unbelief was necessary in order that a prophecy of Esaias (in no way applicable) should be fulfilled (John xii. 37, &c.).

We may at least ask as an indispensable preliminary to our belief in the astounding miracles of the loaves and fishes, that the multitude for whom and before whom they were performed were themselves believers and made converts. If they pronounced against the performance being miraculous, can we be asked to believe? At least, we may require to be assured that the disciples, in whose hands the miraculous loaves and fishes were produced and handled, were fully and lastingly impressed with the astounding miracles.

How many Christians read their Scripture enough to know, that, so far from being converted by these great miracles, the very same people, on the morrow, proclaimed that Jesus had never yet done any miracles,

taunted him with his inferiority to Moses, who, when their forefathers hungered, fed them miraculously with manna, and called upon Jesus to give a sign equal to that? (John vi. 25-33.)

To this Jesus replied by averring that Moses did no such miracle, nor would he do a miracle. He tells that the only bread which he had to give is spiritual bread; and he complains that they ate up his dinner yesterday, but did not acknowledge that there was any miracle in the matter.

The narrative informs us also, that the very disciples from whose hands the sacred unction of the miraculous food was scarce yet removed were upbraided by Jesus for not appreciating, for forgetting, not understanding, "not considering" the miracle (Mark vi. 52). Attributes this to the hardness of their hearts. See also Mark viii. 17, &c.; Matt. xvi. 9, 10.

And, to crown all, John (vi. 66) says that these very disciples (compare ver. 26) were so displeased with Jesus and the whole performance, that they turned their backs upon him, and abandoned him altogether.

Another miracle of the same kind, told only by two evangelists, results in a similar way; and it is curious, that, when Jesus refers to these miracles, he, in regard to each, claims that the miracle extends only to the loaves, omitting the fishes (Matt. xvi. 9, 10; Mark viii. 19, 20; John vi. 26). And, indeed, immediately after the alleged second miracle, Jesus particularly disclaimed the performance of any miracle; saying that it was not his mission to give signs, and that he would not give any to this generation. The same is *intimated* after the first as well.

The alleged miracles are entirely incompatible with this repeated annunciation that he would not perform any for this generation.

Moreover, this firm enunciation is attested by being mentioned six times ; four in general terms, and two in especial refusals, which is stronger than any other allegation in the the Scriptures.

It has, on this account, the appearance of being of the original text ; and whatever is in contradiction savors of doubtful authority, especially when the text charges that the disciples themselves held them to be of no account.

We have, moreover, a great many private miracles, the purpose of which is hard to define, which Jesus enjoined upon the recipients that they should keep secret.

How they came to be divulged is not stated.

The very great miracle of the transfiguration was a strictly private affair, performed only before three of his disciples, who did not need it for their conversion, and who, by his command, kept it secret even from their fellow-disciples till some time after his death. These miracles, as well as those great compound miracles of the loaves and fishes, the miraculous conception, which was not made known by Jesus, and enough of others to form in all the largest bulk and the most astounding of his miracles, appear, therefore, by the record, to have been of no effect towards their alleged general purpose of establishing a belief in his mission, or of converting those before whom they were performed.

Then, again, we find, that, in all their preaching in the

epistles, the apostles who succeeded Christ never narrated one of all these miracles.

So that, besides the probability of their not being known at that period, it indicates clearly, that, to inculcate a belief in the doctrines of Christianity, the miracles were not then, and therefore should not now be, held to be either necessary or desirable.

THE COSMOGONY OF GENESIS.

“The Gospel of Good and Evil” sufficiently proves that we misapprehend and misinterpret the beautiful allegory of the fall of man in the Book of Genesis.

It is easy to find a more rational interpretation, which will show that a truthful picture was intended of some leading law of cosmical development, and of human progress. The original was doubtless hieroglyphic, and like many of the forms, ceremonies, and moral aphorisms of the Israelites, it was adopted from Egypt. The two accounts of creation in the 1st and 2d chapters vary from each other, and both have such want of accord with modern discoveries as may be honestly referred to hieroglyphic obscurity. Astronomy was too well advanced in Egypt before Moses, to permit us to suppose such a puerile mistake as that our little planet is the grand central object and purport of creation, and that the myriads of suns in space were made only to give light to this insignificant globe.

The legend of our first parents was drawn from the same source, as the connected narrative shows; and it

would be yet more wonderful if the same interpreter were not also mistaken in his interpretation of the hieroglyphical picture. If we read it rightly, we shall find in the legend of our first parents a beautiful allegory, that has served as a capital put-off till the human mind should be matured for the true explication of the origin of evil, not here alone, but everywhere in the realms of the Great Creator ; as, by the text itself, the Evil Spirit was in Eden contemporaneously with Adam, and before what we call the first evil.

The allegory plainly represents the stages of human life from infancy to manhood. It teaches that all creations follow certain types, to which each and all have relationship. So man is a type, however far removed, of his Maker. "In the image of God created he them" (viz., Adam and Eve) would be devoid of sense in any other meaning, unless male and female deities be admitted.

Youth is represented as two persons of opposite sexes dwelling in the paradise of a paternal home. The trees of life, and of knowledge of good and evil, are very delicate expressions that are made unmistakable in connection with injunctions against familiarity in that direction, and threats only too natural, viz., the day you do this thing, you will be cast out upon the world to earn amid thorns and briers, and in the sweat of your brow, the bread now so easily provided in the parental home. To your parents you will be as dead thereafter.

The female reaches puberty first. Nature, the irresistible serpent, first addresses her. Something occurs. A delicacy before unknown suggests clothing. How natural in this connection only ! Perceiving this, the

parent knew it all. Behold! they become like us, parents. They are sent away with hard predictions of the pains of parturition, and of toiling for subsistence. The usual guard that young people find now-a-days around the tree of life, the parental treasure, is well illustrated by a two-edged sword of flaming fire.

By the context, it is plainly shown, that the young people were not responsible, and therefore not wilful sinners. When the act was done, they did not "know good from evil," and there was no sin to transmit for retribution to their descendants, even if it were not in any aspect too trifling a cause for the immensity of the resultant misery we affect to believe it engendered. Instead of remedying the evil, we make the Creator take the greatest care to extend and perpetuate its growth to his own everlasting and ever-increasing displeasure.

The interpretation savors of man's errant brain, and not of the providence, of the wisdom and beneficence, of our good Parent the Almighty Ruler of myriads of suns, and ten thousand myriads of worlds, that people space like ourselves.

THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTIONS.

There is nothing in the history of Christianity that is so incredible to Israelites, Mohammedans, and others to whom we present our religion, as the varied stories in Matthew and Luke about the miraculous conception. It is a stumbling-block in our progress of conversion.

The command was peremptory to spread the gospel: but the gospel which the apostles spread had no such strain upon credulity; for, in all their doctrinal epistles, not a word of it is found, nor a hint.

In all that Jesus advanced in evidence of his claim to being intrusted by God with his mission, he never once mentioned this, the strongest of all proofs. How is it that we make it the very corner-stone of our religion when he never gave us authority to do so? when he never taught it, nor did any of his disciples? Does it not seem to admit that Jesus adduced insufficient evidence of his claim, and some one thought it necessary to give us supplementary proof? Is it not singular that it should be left for a supplement to declare the strongest evidence of all? How could Mark or John refuse to indorse it? especially John, whose gospel is later than all others? The presumption is fair that it was not in any extant gospel when Mark wrote, nor in John's time; or that, if it was, they rejected it as not authentic.

It must strike every one as inconsistent that neither Matthew nor Luke contains a word of reference to this great miracle in any part of their gospels, after its first narration.

It is also remarkable, that, if we omit the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke, the three synoptic Gospels would begin at the same starting-point, viz., the advent of John the Baptist, as does also John with some metaphysical preliminaries; so that, if from the two Gospels we cut off the whole story of the miraculous conception, all four narratives will be synchronous and parallel; which they are not as we have them.

It is also notable that Mark tells us the gospel of

Jesus Christ begins with the preaching of John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ. We are to infer that whatever transpired in the life of Jesus before that time is not a part of the gospel.

Jesus himself never referred to any thing antecedent, but spoke only of this period as the beginning of his ministry.

Even in Luke's introductory, he says what he narrates is regarding the things which several others had already narrated, who were from the beginning (of the ministry) ministers of the word, and who saw every thing with their own eyes; and that he had informed himself exactly from the beginning (of the ministry).

From this review, it seems that many things pointing in one direction render it probable: —

1st, That the gospel proper began in those days, as Mark says, with the public advent of John the Baptist.

2d, That, when Mark wrote, no gospel went back of that period.

3d, That Matthew and Luke each originally began with what is now chapter third; and that the first two chapters in each are supplementary by other hands.

4th, Consistency obliges us to admit that the eye-witnesses from the beginning of the ministry did not see with their own eyes the miraculous conception, nor were they present at the interview between the angel and Mary, and so forth; also that their first knowledge of Jesus was when they were first called to the ministry.

5th, These terms seem to be limitations which Luke set to his narrative and to his range of inquiry, as they certainly are to all the narratives by persons who pre-

ceded him, and to whom he refers ; Matthew's narrative being one of them, for its accepted date is earlier than Luke's. If he had seen what is now on the lead of Matthew's narrative, he has so pruned and changed, that each throws discredit on the other.

Looking upon the miraculous conception as a doctrine injurious now to Christianity, though it may have been beneficial at the period of its annexation, we present a comparison of the two stories, with a review of the probabilities of their being authentic.

It may be mentioned here that Christian writers have shown that Marcion's copy of Luke, used in churches in the second century, had not what now form the first two chapters of our version. Its first chapter is now our third. It is also shown, that, if Jesus completed his thirtieth year in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Herod, to whom Luke in the first chapter assigns so notable a part, would have been dead two years before ; a discrepancy which Luke would not have made.

In the great controversies between Justin Martyr and the opponents of Christianity in A.D. 160, and in many others after that date, every text of Scripture was used that went to prove the divine mission of Jesus ; but his miraculous conception does not appear to have been mentioned, which can not be accounted for, except by the fact that it was not gospel at that time.

If the weight of evidence in examining the narratives be as strong against the authenticity as what is already adduced, and if the reason of this age is offended by this dogma, it is humbly suggested that it will be profitable to consider the policy of absolving Christians from

insisting on the doctrine of the miraculous conception as binding on the conscience of Christendom.

It is true we make out other dogmas from single texts not sustained by other evidence ; but, in one of this fundamental importance, we should be permitted to require strict agreement and the concurrent testimony of all the evangelists.

No stronger proofs can be given of the inefficiency of the alleged miracles, or, perhaps, of the improbability of there having been any attempt to do any, than the plainly-stated fact that his own parents and brothers and sisters, who knew especially his miraculous conception, if true, did not believe in his pretensions at all ; and his brothers, hearing of miracles, called on him to let them see one, which he declined. Is it possible that he desired to exclude from salvation his own family ? If they leave us this, their testimony against the miracle of conception especially, we may excuse one another for being influenced by their testimony. Is it not the strongest we have ?

INSTINCT AND REASON.

“ Nature

Counts nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in every thing.”

Reason is educated instinct.

Man, in his pride, thinks he exalts himself by affirming that he alone has powers of reasoning. “ Instinct ” is a word invented for the brain-work of animals, and

“reason” is the word for the like production of his own brain, — not always superior.

This conceit is the parent of much evil treatment towards inferior beings whom it has pleased God to endow with the same organs exactly, and with co-tenancy and dominion over the earth and its productions.

If it humble us to show we are not the only reasoning beings, it gives higher appreciation of our joint Creator’s works, and renders only justice to him, if it can be shown that the number of intelligent beings on the earth is many thousand-fold greater than we have given him credit for.

Instinct is brain-work, as reason is. All brains in animals and in men are composed of the same curiously convoluted medullary substance; they have the same duplex organs, (male and female generators of thought?) the same division into fore and aft hemispheres, the same connection with every part of the body through the telegraphy of the spinal chord and its thousand sub-conductors, the same senses and the same organs carrying to and fro intelligent reports and mandates, and similar members to serve their several purposes. The brain is generated from parents in the same way, and is similarly affected by passion, love, friendship, sympathy, jealousy, emulation, anger, joy, and the like.

Intoxicating liquor and gastronomy act similarly on man, monkey, dog, fowl, and others, curiously changing the brain-work, as well as the general physique.

It is through the slightly-varying constructions of their brain that animals get their distinctive dispositions, tastes, and propensities, as with man. When man tastes,

and dogs smell, each is gathering report for the brain, where decision is made and execution ordered. When the merchant schemes, and the spider makes his snare, it is alike cogitation of brain-work, directing the venture, and promising reward.

In each and all it is a piece of perfect machinery, producing results differing only as one watch differs from another. One watch may indicate the hours, another the minutes, a third the seconds, a fourth the days of the month, and so forth. One may be more complex, and of higher value; but it is only an added wheel or two to the same essential machinery: one power winds them, and one principle guides their movements. One speaks aloud the hour; another knows it, but is dumb. In each, the more complex, the more are the powers weakened by diffusion. Man, in having added organs, gains in one direction, and loses in another. He has not a single sense that is not excelled in animals, — the eagle's eye, the dog's scent, the hare's ear, the spider's touch, the bee's taste, and we may mention many senses and attributes which in man's brain are wanting, — their prescience of weather-changes, detection of poison, the unerring guidance through trackless air and sea of migrating birds and fishes, and many more we might enumerate, that show superiority over our brain and its boasted perfection; for every faculty comes necessarily through the laboratory of the brain.

Music in man is long labor of the brain with perfection in none; and in most of us the faculty is absent. The songsters of the grove begin as we do, — small notes, and practice of brain and vocal organs. But

how perfect their song!—a false note never; and every male of the kind is gifted with the charming faculty. We can not say music is not brain-work; for the mocking-bird (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) attends, studies, makes effort, and succeeds by dint of brain-work; and his delight is to cajole the birds he imitates.

When the beaver and the spider excite our admiration by their perfect construction; when, after accidental breaking, we see them making a tour of inspection, planning and executing repairs with matchless skill, — we call it instinctive ingenuity; but, when the same talent is displayed by man, it is genius, and a high order of reasoning faculty. Yet we must at last refer both to the same Creator, manifesting the same skill through the same kind of brain-work in each alike. Let it be granted that man's reasoning is higher in the scale, purer in the sum of its attributes, we can not fail on dissection to trace out, one by one, nearly every faculty of brain in animals, that goes to make up the mental manifestations of the average man. Take away from what we call reason in man every thing we call instinct in animals, and what would be left to substantiate the exclusiveness we claim? Every faculty that has substantiality, that gives certain guidance, and serves the real purposes of life, would be gone; and what would be left? Conscience and imagination, knowledge of good and evil, metaphysics, and high conceptions of a Supreme Being? If we could believe our dog has a conscience, that he knows wrong from right, that he could be induced to goodness by hope of reward, and deterred from evil by fear of punishment, as man's soul is taught and swayed by religion, we could scarcely deny him a soul of some

sort. However inferior, these qualities, being our own claim to immortality, entitle the possessor, however humble, to immunity from extinction and annihilation. To deny this would be dangerous to our pretensions.

Do animals imagine? Our dog and our cat dream: therefore they imagine. They play fight, and regulate their scratch and bite by a nice measure of reason and imagination. The stampede of wild cattle, the roadster's night-scare at a white horse in pasture, the shying of your team, the watch and bark of our dog, all give proofs of active imagination.

Our dog notes a fit of general ill-humor, and imagines we are offended at him. He notes in the evening our preparation for a hunt on the morrow, and his reason is as sharp as ours in making logical deductions from the premises. Premeditating, scheming, and lying in wait are so common as not to need examples. They are proof of reason in man: why not in animals?

We have said reason is educated instinct. The newborn babe is all instinct, as we would say. Its mind, like its arms, is imbecile. It is only by educating instinct, which means undeveloped brain, that mothers of all animals and men gradually elevate it to reasoning; and it is the term of healthy growth of the brain, and of certain parts of it more than others, that determines the point of expansion. The brain of man has a longer period of growth, and, therefore, greater power of reasoning. To every one of God's creation is given exactly the proportion of reasoning power that is suitable to its condition. Man's is more varied and diffused, that of animals is more concentrated; and the fewer

faculties are compensated by their increased sharpness. It is so with us : —

“Dark night, that from the eye its function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes :
Where’er it doth impair the seeing sense
It pays the hearing double recompense.” — SHAKSPEARE.

The dog knows good from evil. He has religion as we have. Man stands in the place of God to him. He knows and obeys the commandments of his lord better than we do. Here they are : —

1. I am thy lord and master : thou shalt worship no other master.
2. Watch my property.
3. Come ever at my call, and obey my orders.
4. Submit to restraint.
5. Resent not chastisement.
6. Thou shalt not steal.
7. Thou shalt not murder my stock.
8. Commit no nuisance.
9. Stay out doors, and be content with thy kennel.
10. Sacrifice thy life for thy lord.

Another commandment : Thou shalt love thy master with all thy heart and all thy might, and his wife and children as himself.

Will any Christian put his hand on his heart, lift his eyes to heaven, and dare compare his own obedience to his Master’s commandments with that of his dog’s ?

Say you the dog has no conscience ? Mark him when arraigned for transgression. No Christian ever gave proof of being more conscience-stricken, more truly penitent, more humbly suppliant. “Lord, be

merciful to me a sinner!" comes from his heart deeper than power of human utterance.

The dog does believe in rewards and punishments, and as intelligently as we. It is on the certainty of this his belief, that we catechise him in our commandments, that we punish his transgressions, and reward his obedience, to stimulate him by future fear of the one, and hope of the other. He is in advance of us in this, that his religion is not for Sunday; but his devotion is daily, and never sleeping, and he has sense enough to see that it is his interest to be good. Unlike us, therefore, his sins are few, and his virtues many. If we would study the workings of the dog's every-day and practical religion, we might gather useful hints,—useful for reformation.

“The poor dog, man's only constant friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend;
Whose honest heart is all his master's own;
Who lives, moves, breathes, and thinks for him alone,—
Unhonored falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he has on earth.” — BYRON.

We dwell upon the dog because we know him best. But, in the view of our inquiry, we may assume that what the dog is all animals are.

Does any one believe that all the high faculties we find in our dog turn to dust, and go into extinction? It behooves us to pause before admission, lest we compromise our own claims to soul and immortality.

God made us all, every living thing. And each was made to serve the purpose of his intention; being all equally perfect, each for its object. The devout philosopher can not conceive that one class of beings, or

one race of men, is more esteemed by the Creator than another ; especially that in the eye of God a good dog is not as precious for immortality as a bad man. Nor can we conceive that the dog's superior fidelity is less worthy of having a soul to perpetuate virtues not inferior to ours. If his virtues die, ours are in danger. Did He, the Omnipotent and Immortal, ever create any thing that must not, therefore, live for ever ? Being offspring of immortal parentage, how can it die ?

If, by breathing life into man, man became thereby a living soul, how can we exclude other living beings into whom he likewise breathed life, else they would not have similar vital organs and processes and principles ? We hold it to be less an evil to elevate the standard of animals to the glory of the Creator than to gratify our own vanity by undervaluing other creations which God has sanctified by his creative blessing. And, further, we believe we rather greatly elevate ourselves when we can feel that we are not the lowest order of intelligences, not the bottom of all souls and immortalities, but high up in the scale, having many below us.

The Hindoo derives from this belief great expansion of universal kindness, without one drawback ; and, if it be founded well, it may, under Providence, do needful betterment in Christendom.

PRAYER.

The prevailing theory of prayer is, that whatever we pray for God will grant, if it be good for us to make the concession. Granting that it is possible or probable

that the fixed laws of the universe can be subject to a thousand million of daily disturbances, and that miraculous interferences can be made so common and so cheap, we question the benefit of giving for mere asking. This is the way we perpetuate beggary, by teaching the mendicant to rely upon prayer instead of work. It is a law most admirable, that want shall compel men to exertion. The good things of earth, temporal and spiritual, are only well appreciated when they are earned. "Live on sixpence a day, and earn it," was Abernethy's answer to the prayer of a rich man in distress. Hercules answered the prayer of the stalled wagoner, "Put your shoulder to the wheel, and Heaven will help you out of the mud."

There are means provided for obtaining what is possible ; and, those means taken, the acquisition is certain. The greatest happiness of life is in the patient pursuit, and the consequent enjoyment, of acquisition. To grant special dispensations from this healthful and useful law would work only evil to mankind. The pernicious effects would be the same with spiritual gifts, if granted to prayer instead of to works to prepare the heart, as only it can be fitted, to receive and cherish them at their value. A change of heart can only come atom by atom, displacing the evil, and making new growth of good ; and it is a necessity of spiritual permanency that it be the graduated reconstruction of earnest endeavor and practice of good works. Whatever help prayer may be supposed to effect, charity and good works make more sure, more healthy, and more permanent change of heart.

It is the sad experience of observing minds that they

who pray the most in words are far from giving most in charity. We would not be understood to deprecate prayer. What we suggest is prayer in a better form, for the success, as well the enduring good, of the prayerful. Prayer is the fertilizer of earnest effort.

There is a moral atmosphere, unknown to chemistry, from which prayer extracts faith, that strengthens human endeavor; and this turns the force of circumstances to our purpose. In this way, prayer is self-answering and self-rewarding, as every thing else in Nature; which brings it within the domain of universal law, and releases it from all objections to the idea of special providences; giving to every applicant separate hearing, separate judgment, and special execution. This special plan is of impossible conception as a law of Providence, when we consider that it is to be applied to millions of worlds besides our own.

How idly we pray in every Christian congregation to Him who has forbidden us to pray till every brother and every sister is first forgiven! Are the Saviour's words of no account, that we keep up this insulting mockery? Whoso offers prayer, hating his brother, presents a poisoned chalice that will be returned to his own lips.

Whoso condemns her sister prayeth with fetid breath to the averted face of heaven. It would be of great service to people who pray much, and pay high for sanctuary privileges, if we could persuade them to quit praying for a month, and give their time and cost to seeking and relieving the poor and broken-hearted. They would find their change of heart so perfect, that they would not need word-prayers so long as they continue the

prayer of good works. This kind of prayer ascends to Heaven, and brings unasked reward.

There is a German church on Homshire Hill, in Pennsylvania, to which is annexed a parsonage-farm so poor that successive pastors abandoned it. A young enthusiast took the call, saying that prayer would make the grass grow. But it did not. At last, he was detected in carting manure upon it, and was accused of infidelity. "I have as much faith as ever," he said, "in prayer; but the ways of God are mysterious. For some hidden reason, it seems necessary to mix a little manure with the prayers."

We were present at a highly practical sermon on prayers for change of weather, from which we gathered a valuable lesson. It was harvest-time: the season had been dry, but symptoms of rain appeared. Among the slips of paper usually put on the pulpit to be read as notices, the pastor read one asking prayers for rain. This was signed by the village miller, whose grist was stopped; by several vegetable gardeners, and the like; and a few women, probably in want of flour. Presently another paper turned up, being also a request for prayers that the Lord would be graciously pleased to grant a continuance of fine weather till the Lord's people should secure the harvest. The pastor ran his eye over the signatures, and observed they were all farmers. It was then that he examined and announced who were the petitioners. The preacher, to whom all the petitioners were personally known, remarked that this was a dilemma, which, for the first time, brought to his mind a conviction that not only would the Lord decline to change his well-founded laws, but that it was irreverent to ask

it, as equivalent to an impeachment of the wisdom of those laws. He finished by saying, "As one prays for wet, and another for dry weather, and both can not be served, I commend all parties to leave the arrangement to God; trusting, that, in the long-run, each will have his share of what is best for him. And let us join in prayer for light to understand, and thankful hearts to acknowledge, that God's providence is better than man's imaginings."

That there is an efficacy in prayer to nerve the faltering arm, and to awaken a trust which will sustain us under difficulties, is too well established to fear disturbance from this exposition of its too common misapplication. But in no small proportion of our prayers for temporal, and probably for spiritual favors, if the Most High were to grant our cravings, so detailed, instead of letting us work out our own success by faithful endeavor and pious deeds, in lieu of good, evil would be our portion.

A fashion prevails, which we fear is seldom sincere, of setting out our prayers by self-debasement, exaggerated beyond our real convictions.

Deacon Lander, a village shopkeeper in New England, and reputed to be as sharp at a trade as he was powerful in prayer, had some words with Deacon Trueman about an alleged unfairness. In the evening, they met at the regular prayer-meeting. Deacon Lander, in his exordium, exhausted his vocabulary in self-debasement; making himself out a very bad fellow. Deacon Trueman followed, with a high eulogium on his neighbor for the candor of his confession; and he prayed to the Lord to give him the much-needed honesty and

grace he asked for, when his prayer was suddenly cut short by a blow from Deacon Lander, who, between the mutual pommelings, let out as thus : —

“It is all very well to humble ourself before the Lord, in prayer ; but I am a better man any day than you, and I hold myself second to no man in this village for honesty and pious example !”

We often receive from outspoken childhood a true exhibition of motives which we try to hide from our own hearts.

“Papa, please lend me your prayer-book.”

“My child, I want you to pray for yourself.”

“O papa ! I can’t. I don’t know what to pray for ; and ready-made prayers are so handy : a body has just got to read them off.”

Reading a sermon composed in frigid calculation, instead of pouring out fervid words with inspired power to touch the heart, and convert the congregation, is disobedience to the illustrated commands of Christ. It is doing the worst we can, instead of the best, to propagate and enforce his gospel.

But to go before our God, and expect his special interference to accommodate us, or even to listen for a moment to a man who takes a book of second-hand and borrowed prayers, that have been ding-donged in his ears, as from patent machinery, century after century, seems to be a mockery to Heaven. It seems to say to Heaven, “Since you insist on prayer, there are so many of us that we have got a machine that saves us a deal of trouble. It makes one prayer serve for us and our children’s children. Admirable contrivance ! How much more of it you get this way than by the meager

prayer your Son taught us ! But he was simple and illiterate : we are decked in gorgeous array, and full of book-learning. How much better our roundly-turned sentences, our impressive repetitions ! And behold the length of them ! We beseech thee to give us according to their length and the well-studied diction of our best scholars ! ”

We do earnestly pray for reform in this matter. If our Saviour's example be a command, or if we would show respect to his instructions, let us put heart, and not book parroting, into our prayers. Stammering words and rude speech, nay, even dumb aspirations, come they from the fullness of the heart, will reach Heaven, and find acceptance there, when cold and formal speech is scattered on the idle winds away.

“ Fountain of merey, whose pervading eye
Can look within, and read what passes there,
Accept my thoughts for thanks : I have no words.
My soul, o'erfraught with gratitude, rejects
The aid of language : Lord, behold my heart ! ”

THE DEITY.

“ In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God.”

The idea that the over-ruling power is a single person, having no companion of his kind, is nominally entertained by the religious creed of a large proportion of mankind.

It is the nominal belief of Christians, Hindoos, Par-

sees, and others ; but in reality each of these, by an instinct common to all men, while holding to the *theory* of one God, appear to worship three. “ Three persons in one God,” said the Hindoos and the Egyptians before Moses ; and “ three persons in one God,” say Christians now.

It would indeed be strange if the great ruling principle of male and female, and, from their union, progeny, which is the fundamental base of all life, should not be a type, however remote, of the great source of all this life. This faculty of generation by sexual union, which forms the joy and the bond of society, would seem to be a gift from the pre-exerting and everlasting attributes of the Deity itself ; that is to say, every thing generated by the Deity is endowed with the capacity to continue that generation so as thereafter to multiply its kind without direct action of Deity ; or, if you please, God, working through the agency of the parents, continually creates. In either case, the philosophic mind is led to presume a male and female principle as pervading the universe, and as having its great central source in the power that thus imparts of its own creative principle to the agents of production in every department.

It is merely in empty words that we speak of the incomparable happiness of the great solitary Being whose life has no companionship, except with creatures immensely below him. A solitary Being, whose occupation is to work unceasing in keeping in order ten thousand millions of suns with their planets and inhabitants, and who has no confidential, and, so to say, no conjugal companionship, can not be theorized into any sort of happiness of which the human mind can form a conception.

If we suppose three personal Gods, — any number above unity, — we can not rail at those who imagine that Deity consists of a vast race (so to say) of superior beings, inhabiting the suns, and thence directing their surrounding planets, while intercommunicating among themselves by a vast expanse of interlacing filaments.

If personality (so to say) is to be attributed to Deity, omnipresence can only be supposed to mean thoroughly informed and thoroughly presiding by means (we will say) of the machinery of his government; for a personality necessitates a separated something, and is a negation of a universally-diffused any thing.

The difficulties and contradictions involved compel the philosophic mind to the conclusion that the human mind is not competent to penetrate nor to comprehend the mystery of God. The mind is a very small, very weak, and most unreliable machine, prone to err, and especially easy to be deceived and misguided. A certain spirit of inquiry could not probably have been given without its being turned to such subjects; and the vague ideas that the world has so far been satisfied with bear every reasonable sign of being supplied expressly to arrest the destructive strain which else would be fatal to man's weak reasoning faculties.

The deepest thinkers come to the conclusion that it is best to humbly admit the mystery of God to be beyond our comprehension; and that, for all purposes useful to us, the Great Spirit gives us inward revelations besides what is revealed in the vast works of creation. The wonder-working laws in daily activity should be studied by every devout Christian as indispensable aids to the most exalted conceptions of the power, the wisdom, and the glory of the Creator.

PROPHECY.

“ There is a history in all men’s lives
 Figuring the nature of the times deceased ;
 The which observed, a man may prophesy
 With a near aim of the main chance of things
 As yet not come to life, which in their seeds
 And weak beginnings lie entresured.” — SHAKSPEARE.

“ The prophets are drunk when they prophesy.” — ISA. xxviii. 7.

“ The prophets prophesy lies in the name of the Lord.” — JER. xiv.
 14.

“ The prophet is a fool.” — HOS. ix. 7.

“ They prophesy for money.” — MIC. iii. 11.

While we dwell upon a score of prophecies from which we make out some fulfillment, and which would find accomplishment quite as applicable in a thousand other events happening in Hindostan or elsewhere, how is it that we never consider the thousands of prophecies for which there never was fulfillment ? Read Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, mark and number their curious predictions, and you can not but be struck with the conviction that these rhapsodies had not the intent nor the meaning we attach to prophecy. Hundreds of prophets were slinging off predictions by the furlong, vague generalities or unintelligible verbiage ; every prophet called his brother-prophet a liar ; and they accused one another of prophesying any thing commanded for money : and when any thing was clearly foretold, but failed, “ the Lord repented ” of the threatened mischief, and changed his mind. Ezekiel claims

that he was commanded to prophesy against the prophets of Israel generally, for they were a lying set (xiii. 2-6). He says that the absurdities of unfulfilled prophecies had become a proverb. God admits the justice of the proverb, and promises that it shall not be so hereafter; that all prophecies in the future shall be clear as to the things to happen and as to the time of occurrence: there shall be an end to prophecies vague and timeless; and only what shall be accomplished soon and certainly will hereafter be the test of true prophecy. (See Ezek. xii. 22-28.)

If we make any account at all of this counsel of God through Ezekiel, it is decisive against all the alleged prophecies of Christ, which are said to be fulfilled by various events, even if common sense did not condemn the perversion. It is indeed to be lamented that the writers who were at pains to strain at such hard-fitting prophecies had not appreciation enough to understand the self-sustaining power of Jesus. Of what possible account are the alleged prophecies, and their supposed fulfillment,—about calling his son from Egypt, about riding on an ass, casting lots for his garments, so usual among executioners? There is not one of the least bearing: and, if no better prophecy can be made out, we do not hesitate to say that it would be better for the credit of our religion if we should disown them all as interpolations; for it is not only that we gain nothing, but that we lose in the widespread infidelity which comes of mixing up in one enforcement things which are important and credible, and things which are unimportant and incredible. There are reasons of much greater weight why we should drop the alleged prophecies of

Christ; and it is with some reluctance we venture to give them reference. If we do our duty, men will turn to the books of prophecy, and search in the predictions of the Messiah for those quoted by the evangelists. Then they will perceive that the real prophecies have been excluded from their attempts at fulfillment; and, instead, they have rambled through Esaias and elsewhere for scattered phrases; not prophecies of any thing, but narratives in the past tense. If translated as similar words are elsewhere rendered, even the virgin conception will be found to refer to Isaiah's wife, and the child probably Hezekiah. "Young woman," and not "virgin," is the Hebrew word.

When the reader arrives at the real predictions of the Jewish Messiah, he can not fail to be astonished; for not a word has been fulfilled in the person or in the mission of Christ.

The prediction was substantially this, viz., — that a great prince should come, who would redeem the Jewish nation from their depressed condition, and place them higher than ever before among the nations. There was to be universal peace and happiness. Nation shall no longer lift up its sword against nation, and war will be no longer known on the earth. Crime will also cease. The office of the priesthood will be abolished; and, indeed, God will engrave his law on every heart, and all men will obey it spontaneously. (See Jeremiah, Isa. ii. 4, Mic. iv.)

In the fulfillment of all this, have we a single prediction verified? No, not one!

So long as we rely upon these chimerical prophecies, we can not reconcile our Saviour's advent to them;

we can not say the Jews are unreasonable in still looking for the promised Messiah ; nor can we quarrel with our neighbor for his general disbelief in all inspired prophecy, nor for his particular incredulity in the evangelistic applications and fulfillments. A Saviour came into the world ; but he was not what the Jews were taught to expect. We have one safe plea ; viz., that the whole Mosaic religion was set aside and condemned by Jesus, and his own given to replace it ; that, as a matter of fact, it has effectually done so, in combination with that of Mohammed, which is, so to say, an offshoot of Christianity, and an adversary of Judaism.

Then we place our religion on the highest grounds, independent of all miracles and prophecies ; and also independent of, opposed to, and far above, the old pretensions of Moses and his prophets. We have no occasion to carry these dead weights. They encumber, and give no reverence. Christianity can say, "I have no need for ancestors : I am an accomplished fact ; and my own works proclaim that my mission is not from any that went before, but from Heaven."

So far as propagation is a proof of a religion, we have the evidence of ours being one of the most approved ; while the Mosaic has receded before its waves, almost to extinction.

Now, what we want further is, to show that we are worthy of Christ ; that we live up to his religion ; that it has made us better than those of other religions, at least in some really important respects. This most valuable of all proofs, when we can adduce it, will so entirely supersede reliance upon predictions and miracles, and mooted questions of manuscript revelations,

that there will no longer be any grounds for taxing credulity, and making infidel divisions amongst us. A vast amount of evil will be suppressed. Then, indeed, may we be a united band of Christians, working with good conscience and approved success in spreading the thus proved better religion, according to the commandment of Jesus. Then only shall we prove our religion to be true Christianity.

LOCALITIES OF HEAVEN AND HELL.

St. Paul says, God's dwelling is in a far-off sun, beyond the stretch of human vision. (See 1 Tim. vi. 16.)

So many volumes have been written about heaven and hell as fixed localities, and so particular have been the descriptions of their nature, that it seems wonderful none should have pointed out whereaway these places are situated. Heretofore, people have not required this reasonable show that such writers really had any but crude theories. The coming age of universal inquiry and exacting judgment warns us to prepare for such questions.

Ages before our era, the sacred Vedas of Hindostan recognized the reasonableness of the inquiry. They describe twenty-eight hells for sins of magnitude, and many more for smaller sins. They are all beneath the earth and the waters, as earthquakes and volcanic vents are ever-living attestations. There are as many hells as there are varieties of heinousness in crimes; this being

necessary to fair adjustment: and the damned soul suffers till it is made clean, being advanced from apartment to apartment; then it ascends to the lowest heaven, and finally reaches the highest, where God dwells, and becomes re-united with and absorbed in the Great Spirit, pure as it came forth in the beginning. But sincere repentance, and calling on Krishna, will at any time quickly purge his soul of guilt, and his sins will be pardoned. The immortal soul is acknowledged to be incapable of suffering when detached from the body; therefore a body is expressly provided.

The highest heaven is north of the solar sphere, north of Aries and Taurus, and south of the seven stars of the great Polar Bear. The polar star is the pivot on which heaven revolves. In this celestial sphere, the virtuous live in uninterrupted enjoyment until they have received the full reward of their works. After this, they return to the world, and go into a new round of life as before. This is the manner in which they who did good deeds for the hope of reward are fully recompensed, and far even beyond their deserts; but they who were virtuous, and served God by devotion and charity, without the selfish hope of being paid highly for it, but for pure love of piety and goodness, have a higher destiny. They are relieved from further births: they lose their identity, and they obtain that greatest and highest of all boons, — absorption into the Great Spirit.

The Persians are taught by their Zendavesta that hell is away down in the interior earth, and heaven is in the sun, where God dwells. Every sun is a seat of a Godhead, or Great Spirit, that governs the planets belong-

ing to his dominion. It is with that Deity alone that the appurtenant planets have to do. From that sun they get every thing. Not even a thought comes from the brain of man or animal that is not inspired and generated by the sunbeam. Every devout Parsee is up and dressed betimes to receive with welcome befitting the Giver of all good, when he makes his matin visit, arrayed in golden effulgence, proffering bounties and blessings to the varied forms of life in the many worlds that make faithful circuit around the throne of his Majesty. "Behold the birds, the beasts, and all life, up and expecting! Shall man alone, forgetful and ungrateful, permit the Lord of all to call and find the door closed, and none to bid him welcome, and receive his blessing and his benefactions?"

"They believe the sun is a material God,
And representative of the Unknown."

Say what we will, these religions make more fervid devotion than ours. As spirit needs body to give it effect, so abstract theories, to be effective, require the aid of a visible substantiability. In religion, man is at best but a child. If he were all spirit, abstraction might attach him; but he is earthly: and something material is needful to mediate, as it were, between his earth-bound spirit and ethereal heaven. Ornate temples, chiming bells, organs, sacred melodies, rich altars and drapery, imposing forms and ceremonies, flowers of language, and other devices, give material aid and quickening to devotion; and, in exact measurement with the felicitous selection of such material attractions, we find the followers of Christ show faith unshakable,

attachement to their altars, reverence for their pastors, and devotion to their religious discipline. But it is not to Jesus we are to refer for their introduction into Christianity.

Still, with all our devices, we are immeasurably behind the Parsee in felicitous device for the promotion of every-day piety, for religious unity, and for preservation from dogmatic dissensions. The Hindoo hell is a thousand-fold more efficient than ours, because its temperate pretensions and graduated scale commend it to their faith; while our extravagant, vague, and revolting hell — teaching, not expiation, in excuse for such an institution in the economy of a benevolent Providence, but the perpetuation of what is hateful to God — makes it impossible of intelligent belief: and thus it stands in the way of some credible terror that might be doing the intended service for repression of crime.

The Hindoo has also a pointed heaven to cast his eyes upon; while our eyes, like the spokes of a carriage-wheel, look vague in all directions, and see no local habitation for the mansions of eternal felicity. These people have the same moral law as our religion; but we desire to convert them to our dogmas. If we point all around the circle as the place of heaven, they will consider everywhere means nowhere; and a religion without a seated heaven will not give them favorable impression.

CONVERTING THE HEATHEN.

If we consider that it is our duty to convert the heathen from his errors, we should begin by converting ourselves, from ignorance of the people we would teach, to reasonable knowledge of what they already believe, and have believed, long centuries before Jesus was born. If we find that nine parts in ten, if not the whole, of our religious instruction is identical with theirs, we shall be saved much time and pains by admitting the fact, and by also admitting, that, being identical and older, their claim to revelation and inspiration has equal proof with ours, together with the sanction of higher antiquity.

The early fathers of Christianity (as we shall show) took this method of converting, by showing that our doctrines were of high antiquity, and could be found in older religions, known to their opponents. From the miraculous incarnation to the crucifixion, Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), Tertullian (200 A.D.), showed that Christianity claimed only what they did for their religions. What we have to do is to dwell upon the points of superiority of our religion, which reduces our work to few points. To these let us concentrate our powers of reason and eloquence, when we have first gained their confidence, by admiring what in theirs is like ours; and we may hope for success.

To give the reader a general idea that other nations have also good religions, and to show that we run in channels of thought much like theirs, we present ex-

tracts from various authorities. It would be found no condescension for a devout Christian to consult the sacred books of many religions we call heathen, with a view to profitable aids to devotion, as well as to enlightened appreciation of God's spiritual providence so universally and impartially distributed among all his children.

HEATHEN RELIGIONS.

Converts. — Father Gregory, being asked what was his progress in India, exclaimed, "Progress! how can we ever hope to make progress in converting a people, who, when we mention a miracle of our Christ, tell us of the infinitely greater ones of their Christ?"

Lieut.-Col. Sleeman says, "The success of Christianity in India has always depended upon the emoluments given the natives to make the change."

Archbishop Jeffreys, a missionary to India, says, "For one really converted Christian, the drinking practices of the English have made fully a thousand drunkards."

Miracles. — "The Hindoos have irresistible proof of their miracles ever right before their eyes. Every mountain, every stream, is consecrated by some miraculous legend of change in form or position. Hence our miracles are quite without value as means for their conversion. They never doubt our miracles and prophecies, because God must have given us also a religion. He had given them a religion ages ago; and why not to his younger children? But they express surprise for the very meager miracles done for ours." — SLEEMAN.

Sacrificial Atonement. — “The Khouds, north of Hindostan, have a dogma that the sins of the people can only be expiated by the occasional sacrifice of a human being. They always pay a price for the victim: When they are slaughtering him, they exclaim, ‘We have bought you with a price, and no sin rests upon us.’” — JOURNAL ASIAT. SOC.

“They had prophets, revelations, and inspired writers; and their priests claim inspiration, by which, alone, the Scriptures can be interpreted.” — Do.

Identity of Heathen and Christian Religions. — From Father Bouchet’s missionary letters to Bishop of Avranches, quoted by Chateaubriand: —

“The ancient East-Indian fables abound in traditions which embody in their moral instruction all the principal truths of our religion, and all the prominent traditions in our Scriptures. They teach a doctrine like our adorable Trinity: ‘Three persons in one God!’ They are still more explicit in all that relates to the incarnation. Many times, they assert, has the ‘second person of their Trinity been incarnate miraculously, and always appeared as the Saviour or Redeemer of man.’”

“The doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation were more generally introduced into India through the ancient Puranas.” — H. T. PRINSEPS.

“The Trinity was a leading dogma of Egypt two thousand years before Christ. It is sculptured on all the tombs.” — WILKINSON.

From the different Orphic fragments, Corey (p. 355) gives a list of nations who had Trinities, and authors who mention them, viz. : —

From the Abbé Dubois, a Catholic missionary in

India for thirty-two years, we extract the following : —

“ There is scarcely a sect or a dogma in Christianity that has not its match in the much more ancient religion of Hindostan. The *Christian Millenium* is almost a literal copy of the expected tenth incarnation of Vishnu ; and they correspond alike in their origin, motives, and expected effects ” (220).

Women. — “ Europeans form their judgment of women in India from the lowest castes. I can affirm, that, among the good castes, Hindoo females, especially married ones, are worthy to be taken as patterns of chastity and fidelity by Christians in Europe ; and no people surpass them in tenderness to children.”

Converts. — “ I am persuaded that it is impracticable to make real converts of Hindoos to our faith. During my long years of unceasing efforts, I have made what missionaries usually call converts, of less than three hundred persons. Of these two-thirds were beggars, and one-third vagrants, and such like, whom none else would receive. So soon as there would appear to be no advantage, the new converts would abandon the faith ; and I am ashamed to say, what is the truth, that only the worst among them continued Christians ” (134).

“ If we could lay aside our European prejudices, we should find the Hindoos nearly our equals in all that is good, and only our inferiors in all that is bad ” (155).

Hindoo Virtue. — The virtues of the followers of the religion of Hindostan are attested by Warren Hastings, Sir William Jones, Cornwallis, Robertson, Colebrook, Hawkins, Wilkins, Bishop Heber, Sir James Outram, Lieut.-Col. Sleeman, &c.

Ram-Mohum-Roy, who lived in London in 1831, and died there in 1836, gave Englishmen a practical proof that the Hindoo religion is not incompatible with the highest order of learning and practical virtue. "His noble appearance, his dignified behavior, and his prudent discourse, made a lasting impression."

This learned and devout Hindoo was the head of the Unitarian faith in India in 1820. He tried to make a reformation to correct the corruptions that had accumulated and destroyed the simple purity of their religion; foremost among the reforms being the abolition of the Trinity, which he explained to be a very ancient dogma, growing out of deifying the attributes of God, and over-worship of successful reformers. He did not succeed. We are told that this was owing to his rejecting the advice that success was only possible by his consenting to claim a revelation, and a miraculous advent.

FROM THE INSTITUTES OF MENO.

(FROM SIR WILLIAM JONES. — VOL. III.)

Hindoo Baptism.—The priest, in performing this rite says (how beautiful and how touching!), "Little babe, thou enterest the world weeping, while all around thee smile. May thou so live, that thou mayest depart in smiles, while all around thee weep."

Absolution is granted by the priest on confession and sincere repentance; a penance being enjoined (p. 436).

Revelation.—Providence continually reveals laws for the age and the people. As these change, some become obsolete; and new ones, adapted to the altered condition of things, are revealed to the most devout Brahmins.

It was thus that were abolished from time to time

sacrificing cattle, the use of exhilarating drinks, the begetting of children by the brother of one deceased whose widow is childless, &c., &c. And the prohibition to defend one's life when assailed has been abrogated by the example of Krishna himself (pp. 463-466).

The Secret Name of God has always been held as a great mystery, known only to the highest Brahmins; but it is said to be known as "Aum."

The Scripture is to angels, to patriarchs, and to mankind, an eye giving constant light. Nor could the Veda Sastra have been made by human faculties; neither can it be measured by human reason unassisted by revealed glosses and comments. This is a sure proposition (p. 457).

Unity of God. — A true knowledge of the one Supreme God, and the adoration of the Almighty, it is the duty of every one to acquire from the Vedas, where it is taught with all the rules of good conduct necessary to lead mankind to virtue (p. 455).

Many gods are invoked by the uninformed; but these are only personifications of the various attributes of the one Divine Spirit.

Free Will and Destiny. — All worlds are seated in the Divine Spirit; producing by a chain of cause and effect, consistent, no doubt, with free will, the connected series of acts performed by embodied souls (p. 456).

Consanguinity. — A man must not marry sisters from the same womb, nor daughter of an uncle nor an aunt. Marriage should not be contracted even within the sixth degree of descent from paternal or maternal ancestors. A scrupulous person will not marry a girl of the same name lest she might be so related (p. 119, &c.).

Temptation. — A woman is capable to draw from the right path in life, not a fool only, but even a sage. Be guarded when alone with her: the assemblage of corporeal organs is too powerful for philosophy to resist (p. 112).

Missionaries. — James Prinsep, among the transcripts he has collected from Mural edicts issued by a Buddhist monarch, two centuries before Jesus Christ, gives us one announcing the appointment of missionaries to go abroad, “and drown the nations with the overflowing truths of our religion, to release them from the fetters of sin, and bring them into the salvation which passeth understanding.”

St. Paul anticipated. — Another exhorts the people to look upon the glory of this world as transitory, “to look beyond, to fight the good fight of faith, to achieve the victory of victories by conquering the passions; thus overcoming this world, and vanquishing the next.”

From the very ancient sacred books of the Singalese, translated by Edward Upham, we collect evidences of many curious resemblances to dogmas and ceremonials revived in our age. The date of their record is variously estimated by authorities from 949 to 1036 before our Christ. Sir William Jones dates their incarnation of Buddha at 1014 B.C.

Incarnations of God. — Many are recorded; and generally a voice from heaven announces the conception to the woman, by the words, “That which is conceived in thee is blessed” (p. 54).

Miracles which throw ours into insignificance — suspension in the air, and raising the dead after long burial in a tomb guarded by British sentinels — have often been

done before British regiments according to official documents.

Casting out Devils is an every-day performance by the divine Buddha in Ceylon.

Tonsure and Vows of Celibacy are priestly practices.

Exoteric and Esoteric Interpretations are made of the same texts, after the manner of early Christian sects, who learned from Plato.

Religious Corruption by the priests, and falsification of the texts of Scripture, provoked, every few ages, a grand religious crusade, in which all their books were burned, and new and correct ones written (pp. 312-323).

Proof of their Religion. — Besides miracles and innate superiority, the unexampled rapidity of its extension is pointed to, and the speaking fact that God's favor is shown by its being this day the sole religious guide of more people than any other.

Prophecy. — Great events clearly prophesied and fulfilled to the date predicted, without any ambiguity of phrase, or strain of application, abound in their records. They lost a relic (captured by the Portuguese, and purposely destroyed) upon which hung a terrible prophecy. This was averted by the chief priest's finding the identical tooth of Buddha restored by miracle, and floating on a lotus-flower.

Devils are human beings who have fallen from their state of happiness in heaven.

The Day of Judgment follows death without delay.

Sabbath. — Every seventh day of the four changes of the moon is for public worship (p. 161).

Parables answering to many of ours are given. The foolish merchants, and the birds in the net, are to the

same purpose as “the foolish virgins,” and “the house divided.”

Halos. — Saints are represented as in our Catholic churches.

Relics. — Their bones are preserved in costly shrines, and work miracles.

The Altar. — Incense is burned, lamps are lighted, a chalice is used and holy water.

The Commandments. — The ten are often mentioned, but five only appear; viz., 1. Not to kill; 2. Not to steal; 3. Not to fornicate; 4. Not to lie; 5. Not to intoxicate.

Tolerance. — Abul Fuzul (prime minister to the Emperor Akbar) says every sect becomes infatuated with dogmas, which it persecutes others to adopt. Did men listen to reason, they would cease to interfere with religious convictions; for what is gained, except making men conceal without changing their opinions?

The people of Thibet are devout and charitable. Though strongly attached to their religion, they freely allow their daughters to marry, and embrace any religion; for they believe all religions are, in essential principles, the same (Calcutta Oriental Quarterly Magazine).

Moral Philosophy. — The works of Imamod Deen and Nuzurad Deen of Thons are two of the best secular works perhaps ever written on the human mind, and man's duty to his fellow-man, — less dry than Aristotle, and more practical than Plato. — SLEEMAN, p. 56.

Public Charities. — To give an idea of the benevolence of the Hindoos, Lieut.-Col. Sleeman gives us the number of their public works, registered by his orders

in 1829, in the single district of Jubbupore ; population one-half million : —

2,280 water-tanks.

209 large wells, with steps to the water.

1,560 “ “ walled, but not stepped.

360 Hindoo temples.

22 Mohammedan mosques.

(Rev. Stephen Olin refers to this kind of benevolence.) The cost of these would be in England £3,500,000. Every one of these was erected by individuals who could in no way profit by them, except in approving consciences and the blessings of the public. Besides, I should estimate three thousand groves of mango and tamarind trees to give shade and shelter and refreshing fruits to travelers.

Private Kindness and Unselfishness. — A water-tank or a well in India has a value which an Englishman can hardly conceive. It is the Indian's sole dependence ; for all his crops require irrigation. The farm which has water rents highly ; while the one next to it, without water, commands a very low price. Yet there can not be found an instance where a Hindoo does not welcome his neighbor to the gratuitous daily use of the water of his well when he has finished his irrigation.

Col. Sleeman tried to persuade one who complained of his rent to do as Christians do with their neighbors, — make them pay for the water. The benevolent Hindoo was shocked at the suggestion. “ I pay a high rent for its use ; but do I not get all the water I want ? ” He would rather perish with God's blessing than to charge his neighbor for the water, which is a free gift

of God to all. "They acknowledge it as a gift from me: this is a great reward."

Practical Value of the Religion of the Hindoos. — Read the above, O Christian! and say to the Hindoo, before God, if thou darest, "My religion is better than thine; for it is the parent of greater charity."

Education. — Perhaps there are few countries where education is more generally diffused. After his seven-years' study, the head of a Mohammedan student in India is as well stored as one just graduated at Oxford. — SLEEMAN.

Extract from Wilson's translation of the Vishnu Purana: —

The Hindoo Christ, Krishna, was born also of a married woman without the agency of her husband. "The Holy Ghost crept into her womb while her husband slept." "The Holy Ghost" ("the Word," "the third person of the Godhead," are also names applied) became also incarnate in a similar way, and assisted like John the Baptist. The reigning king, fearing the prophecy that this child should become king over his people, sought the infant diligently to kill him; and, not finding him, he ordered the massacre of all the male children, by which was fulfilled the prophecy; but the parents fled with the child into a distant country, and thus escaped. On their way they were met by persons bringing tribute.

In his boyhood, Krishna had a struggle with the "snake demon," and vanquished him. The snake cried aloud, attesting the divinity of Krishna, and pleaded for mercy sensibly, thus: "Thou didst create the world. The species, form, and nature of all things are thy

work. That I have a snake's disposition is your law, not my fault. Such as thou madest me I am. If I should act differently, then, indeed, would I merit punishment."

Thus appeased, Krishna, having with his foot pressed out the poison, let the serpent go, saying that the mark of his foot on its front would protect it from all who desire to slay it.

The Hindoo gospel is glossed with notes by the compilers, in which the acts of Krishna are separated into those which are to be attributed to his human, and those to his divine nature. So nicely is the distinction drawn, that Krishna in his human nature worshiped himself in his divine nature (pp. 529-564).

His humble origin is pointed to by the sects which believe him only man; his miracles, by believers in his divinity. But the history makes him deny his divinity, and forbids his disciples to worship him (pp. 351-589).

A crooked woman presents fragrant and costly ointment to anoint his person, and he straightens her (p. 550).

Though Krishna taught deference to parents in all cases, yet the Gopis abandoned father, mother, husband, and kin for Krishna's sake (p. 570).

The following phrases are taken from the ancient Hindoo Scriptures, dating beyond the era of Moses (Sir William Jones): —

"I fly to Krishna for refuge, and by penance shall work out the salvation of my soul" (p. 368).

"Calling on the name of Krishna will save from harm those who believe in him" (pp. 139-136).

"Krishna came into the world for the salvation of mankind" (p. 158).

“He is the Saviour and preserver of the world” (p. 140).

“Krishna is the first-born” (p. 159).

“He descended to take upon himself the burdens of the earth” (p. 427).

“He willed to become mortal for the good of the world” (p. 588).

“Calling on Krishna is the only salvation” (p. 629, *note*).

“The Hindoo Christ was transfigured.” — SIR WILLIAM JONES, vol. i., p. 466.

“He came to establish righteousness on the earth” (p. 494).

“Just previously to his transfiguration on the mount, he fed a multitude that followed him.” (It is to be inferred that it was miraculous, though it does not say so.) (P. 525.)

One of Krishna’s miracles was, viz., during one of the great monsoons, he picked up a mountain, and held it over the people seven days and nights, and afterwards replaced it; the mountain being shown to this day (p. 527).

A note says that some impious infidels pretend that this is merely a false translation of a hieroglyph which represents Krishna holding an ant-hill shaped umbrella (figurative merely of protection) over his own family. The Hindoo Christ foretold his own death, and ascension into heaven, and the dispersion of his people (p. 609).

“Many false Krishnas arose, crying, ‘Lo! here I am, Krishna!’” (p. 531).

“He once was surrounded by thieves; and, being sorely distressed, cried aloud in bitterness, ‘Alas, alas! I am deserted by my Lord!’” (P. 615.)

“After the death of the Hindoo Christ, the old ritual, its forms and ceremonies, were abolished” (p. 628). “Idle prayers, fruitless ceremonies, and useless feasts.”

The death of the Hindoo Christ occurred in his hundredth year, by an unintentional wound. The cause of it, being truly penitent, prayed forgiveness. Krishna granted it, and assured him that “this day shalt thou be with me in heaven.” A celestial car came down; and Krishna, abandoning his mortal body, ascended that day into heaven” (p. 612).

A rich man of devotion took the body, performed the last ceremonies, and consumed it on the funeral-pyre; and thus his mortal body ascended to the skies (p. 613).

The Hindoo Vedas have been rewritten twenty-eight times; it being necessary, on account of constant changes in words, and their meaning in all languages, to renew the text every four ages (p. 269). For some years, however, owing to neglect of religion, the Vedas were lost. One sage, who had not neglected his studies, with the aid of inspiration re-compiled them (p. 285).

Sir William Jones tells us that the very same history attaches to the Persian Zeratusht.

To stop the mouth of those who question the Scripture, “you must raise the cry of ‘Infidels!’ against them.”

Resignation. — The disposition to receive misfortunes with resignation and good-humor is characteristic of Orientals, as distinguished from Europeans (Rev. J. Perkins; also Charles Fellows).

Moral Maxims. — Hottinger gives a catalogue of those of the Mohammedans, to show their excellence. Bayle says of them, that they contain the most excellent pre-

cepts that have been given to man for the practice of virtue, and the avoidance of vice. M. Simon adds his testimony.

We have the testimony of all the ancient writers, that the Egyptians were the most devout people in the world ; and the records of their monuments confirm it. — SIR GARD. WILKINSON, vol. i.

Comparative Devotion. — The Persians are far more susceptible of feeling than we ; and their devotion contrasts sadly with the cold and heartless manner of Christians at their devotions. (Substantially from Rev. J. Perkins.)

Rev. Dr. Duff, a Scotch missionary, says the heathen of London far surpass those of India in wickedness.

Rev. Dr. Olin bears testimony to the prayerful and devotional character of the Mussulman, and the practical character of his religion. He says that there is in this a reason for the very trifling success of our missionary labors among them. An American missionary of many years' experience made to us a similar observation at Cairo.

Prostitution. — Dr. Olin was amazed, at Geneh on the Nile, to see public women in a Mohammedan town. He found that all the efforts of the government to suppress this evil were defeated by Christian travelers, who upheld its continuance.

Doctrine of Charity. — “Every good act,” said Mohammed, “is charity.” An exhortation to virtuous deeds is equal to giving alms ; putting a wanderer in the right road is charity ; removing obstructions from the highway, giving water to the thirsty, are charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he does his fel-

low-men. When he dies, people may say, "What property has he left?" but the angels who examine him in the grave will ask, "What good deeds hast thou sent before thee?" — WASHINGTON IRVING'S *Life of Mohammed*.

Worship. — Dr. Mott says, "I have watched the followers of Mohammed everywhere, in Turkey and in Egypt; and they appear infinitely more faithful and sincere in their forms of worship than Christians." The doctor feels constrained to recommend them to Christians as models for imitation.

Prayer. — Their devotion to religion far excels ours. Though they have no priesthood, they pray more than we; and they make no parade of piety (Charles Fellows).

Hospitality is universal. "Feed the stranger" is their law.

Trinity. — Zoroaster (1200 B.C.) taught three persons in the godhead; 1st, The Supreme Being; 2d, Proceeding from him through the creative word, Ormuzd, the good spirit; 3d, Ahriman, the evil spirit, Judgment follows death at once.

Rewards and Punishments. — These are awarded so as to do justice to all. In time, all evil will be converted into good. The only object of punishment, like painful surgery, is to eradicate the bad, and restore the diseased limb to health. The Devil and his angels will finally become good, and the empire of the Good Spirit will prevail, and continue for ever.

This doctrine is worthy of Christian consideration.

The Pentateuch. — M. Langles, a learned exponent of Hindoo literature, says that the Egyptians obtained from Hindostan the basis of their religion, each claiming

revelation from God. "I have collected evidence to convince the most incredulous that the Pentateuch is made up from Egyptian books, and the original still exists in India."

Religion of Persia. — The primeval religion of Iran is pronounced by Sir Isaac Newton "the oldest in the world; and it may justly be called the noblest." A system of devotion too pure and sublime to be long proof against ecclesiastical corruption (Sir William Jones).

CONCESSIONS OF THE FATHERS TO HEATHEN RELIGIONS AND MARTYROLOGY.

We said that we would show that early Christian fathers adopted the plan of conceding to other religions what was due. Take the following examples: —

Justin Martyr, in his apology to Antoninus Pius, A.D. 150: "In many things we hold the same opinions as your poets and philosophers," who taught the same system of rewards and punishments. We say punishment has no end. Plato says it lasts a thousand years.

Miraculous Conception. — When we say Jesus was begotten of a virgin by God, and was the *word* of God, it corresponds with the tenets you hold when you call Mercury the word of God. That he was born of a virgin is only what you assert of Perseus.

Miraculous Cures. — When we assert that Jesus cured the lame, blind, and palsied, and raised the dead, we claim no more than you do for Esculapius.

Ascension. — You say that Esculapius was also taken

up to heaven ; nay, you bring some to swear they saw Cæsar, who was burned, ascend to heaven from the funeral-pyre.

Incarnation. — Our mystery of the incarnation, for the instruction and improvement of mankind, is a thing told by your poets as happening long before.

Crucifixion. — You ridicule the idea of crucifying the Son of God. But your sons of Jupiter suffered and died in the same way, rose and ascended to heaven.

Christianity Old as the World. — Justin Martyr says, “It is objected that Christianity was withheld from the world till about one hundred and fifty years ago. But it is as old as the world. Socrates and Heraclitus, and other philosophers who lived according to reason, were really Christians.”

Tertullian, A.D. 200, in his “Apology” says, “We are ridiculed for claiming a new revelation of doctrines held by yourselves. That God will come to judge the world was taught by your philosophers. You have a hell similar to ours. Your Elysian Fields are but another name for our Paradise.

The Logos, or the Word. — Your philosophers also agree with us in ascribing the creation to the Logos, or the word, or reason of God. Zeno teaches the same ; and Cleanthes ascribes it to the spirit which pervades the universe. This is our faith. To show that the sacrifice of life for our religion (in Jesus and in the martyrs) is not incredible, he reminds them that Mutius left his hand on the altar, Empedocles threw himself alive into the burning abyss of Ætna. She who founded Carthage sacrificed herself on the funeral-pyre to secure her chastity. A harlot of Athens, being under torture, bit

off her tongue, that her agony might not tempt her to betray a friend. Zeno Eleates suffered scourging to death for his opinions. How many noble Spartans have unflinchingly borne extreme tortures rather than yield! All that Christians claim of religious sacrifice, others have undergone for country and for private friendship. (Apology, chap. 50.)

Theophilus of Antioch, and Autolycum, lib. ii. p. 115; and Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata, lib. iv. p. 541, — give collections of passages from heathen works that agree with many tenets of Christianity. If the early fathers found these concessions the best way to win the heathen, then may we not follow their example with profit?

TRANSMUTATION OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Nothing gives more convincing illustration of the law of perpetual transmutation of evil into good, and back again in reverse, than the study of climatology.

The air, so bland and so beautiful at Naples, is inhospitable at Iceland. At one season it is all frowns, at another all smiles, at St. Petersburg. Yet it is the same air. The sea is all frosty and repulsive at Greenland, and warm and inviting in the Gulf of Mexico. Yet it is the same element. It is to these variations of temperature that our oceans of air and of water owe their movements, and we our health. Equatorial heat and polar cold keep up constant currents to and fro between the extremes. Good and evil make continual

commerce. It is trade, in all its features. The north produces more cold than it wants ; so the south heat. Each exports its surplus.

The exuberant growth that comes of excess of heat brings poison to the air ; but the destruction of life from the excess of cold is checked by infusion of the same air. By interchange, each corrects the failings of the other. What is evil at the equator is good when sent to the north. What is terrible evil at the north is coveted good at the south. You complain of ice : we can't get enough of it, says one. The other says, you call heat a trouble : it is just what we want to cure our troubles.

It will be seen that this arrangement in the physical world is a self-regulating and compulsory law, without which there would be no healthy life on this planet. It is also a self-detergent process, by which evils are purged out, and the elements restored to purity ; and so kept for ever going new rounds of usefulness. No air nor water is lost or cast away on account of being tainted. It is the taint that is cast off, and the substance is saved.

When we make ourselves thoroughly masters of a law of Providence, touching what is material, we may be sure that the same is the law for what is analogous in the moral circuit.

Man is made up of material elements and material organs. His life is material in so large proportions, and it is so dominated by material influences of climate and other forces, that the soul, which is in intimate and inseparable bondage to it, must of necessity be ruled by one and the same law. Insanity and kindred disturb-

ances, that come to the soul from organic disease of the material brain, make this sufficiently evident.

Let happiness, virtue, and riches be represented as equatorial; and misery, vice, and empty pockets as polar. Riches over much, from unresting tropical growth, breed corruption. If the moral polar regions lend us no counter-currents of under air to give movement to the equatorial moral atmosphere, it stagnates, and all its rich powers for good die, and turn to disease, instead of to moral fertilization and fruitage. Let moral Boreas, then, send on his cold current of miseries, his vagabonds with their vices and their empty pockets, and mark the change !

Charity springs into growth; that blessed above all virtues, which was dying for want of pabulum, takes on growth just in proportion as misery is supplied for it to feed upon. Yesterday the stagnant moral atmosphere stupefied the world into indolence and apathy, leading to moral death. To-day, let loose the current of vagabonds, and "miracle" is the word for the instant awakening of moral life ! A new creation comes, giving trade and healthy interchange of surplus: bolts and bars, safety-chests, prisons, legislators, judges, lawyers, preachers, book-printers, watchmen; plans and devices of genius,—a vast life-returning counter-current of good.

In a population of millions, this admirable law leaves not one without quickening his wits and vigilant faculties. In every act of his life, he has to consider the cheating, and the many ways he may lose his money. This gives perpetual motion to the health of his brain, and the sharpening of his wits, while it trebles all his enjoy-

ments by the zest that comes of earning their security. Between man and man, this discipline may seem hard to the discipline. But, in the light of providential inquiry, the moral circuit is every way admirable as its physical analogue ; and, like it, the currents and counter-currents will continue for ever, as a necessity of moral motion. Like children enforced with medicine, virtue may think itself wronged ; but it gets fair exchange. It owes its very life to the trade ; so much vice to save so much virtue from death by starvation !

Paul goes so far as to say God makes men stubborn unbelievers, that he may have some objects to give exercise to his mercy. And the apostle declares this policy admirable in science and in wisdom. (Rom. xi. 32, 33.)

It is thus that evil is neutralized by the good it generates from its loins as it were ; for vice is surely the parent of virtue in the plan of Providence. Nothing is made in vain ; and it is the purpose of this treatise to illustrate the truth to the glory of the Most High.

To complete the simile, it should appear that all vice is self-purged in this circuit ; that the soul-element is cleansed of impurities coming from its passage through tainted mediums, and that it thus becomes regenerated and purified for continued circuits of usefulness in the service of its Creator. In other parts of this work, we are led, by various channels of reasoning, to the strengthening of this conviction ; and we hope to convince our readers, that it is the clearest development of the wisdom, and of the only unquestioned benevolence of our Great Parent, in thus giving eternal triumph to Good over Evil.

PRAISING GOD.

“Who flatters is of all mankind the lowest,
Save he who courts the flattery.”

The weakest man, and he who least merits, is most fond of praise. The highest order of mind and heart, men of disinterested piety and benevolence, have least appetite for praise ; and we must be carefully sparing of it if we would avoid suspicion and disgust.

All our conceptions of God are based upon our being in his similitude. We give him a throne and a court of heaven, angels to wait, cherubims and a host of souls praising him unceasingly. There is no doubt a purpose in this instinct of universal religion ; but, if God is the Great Almighty over all, it is questionable if its purpose is his personal gratification. It would seem inconsistent with his exalted perfection to take delight in listening to praises of himself, especially from atomic existences, such as men from the smallest planet, but one remove from the brute, and not one in every million knowing enough of the vast universe of God, or even of his system of good and evil, to make their praises of deserved proportions. Better not pray, than to “damn with faint praise,” if the purpose be as represented. Men, before going to kingly courts, are careful to study the highest acts of the monarch, for their compliments ; that kings and ministers may feel that it is intelligent praise. Man, with his head filled by popular theology, by notions of God’s government not com-

pletely reconcilable with unbounded wisdom and eternal and unalloyed benevolence, is not a fit delegate to sound the just praises of omnipotence. It takes the character of flattery when we who believe in hell call his mercy infinite ! In this view, he would fit himself for the duty of offering praise should prepare himself by studying God in his starry heavens. It is his duty to study why evil is here, how it comports with the wisdom of God, and how its perpetuation by eternal retribution is reconcilable with eternal and illimitable goodness. Till he can thus qualify himself, he is not fit to offer that full-hearted and intelligent praise which is due to the Giver of all good.

When, however, we consider how unworthy of favor our faint and ignorant praise must be, and how impossible of service to God personally, it seems that its only practical service may be to keep down our own pride, and to fertilize the devotional principle. This is rendered probable by the fact, that every prayer of praise is largely composed of self-abasement ; and this part of such prayers is always exaggerated beyond what we would permit any one else to aver as our true character. In this way we recognize, in the praising of God, an institution all for our own good. We are then equally impressed with its greater efficiency, the more we learn of our Creator's vast works, of the justice of his dealings with mankind, and of the boundless expanse and the unalloyed perfection of his goodness. Thus instructed, man may begin to feel true humility and devotion, inexpressibly above our sectarian acquisitions.

If the Christian pulpit would raise us upward towards

heaven, it may exchange dogmatic disputation for instruction of the kind indicated.

“In contemplation of created things,
By steps we may ascend to God.”

THE NEXT WORLD.

“On that unknown and silent shore
Shall we not meet as heretofore?” — SHAKSPEARE.

“There is, they say, — and I believe there is, —
A spark within us of immortal fire,
That, when the body sinks, escapes to heaven,
Its native seat, and mixes with the gods.” — ARMSTRONG.

The thousand religions in the world have this doubt thrown over their pretensions. Each claims alike to be revealed to one only person. Not one of them is an internal revelation of God to more than one man. In not one of them has the revelation been made to woman, who is their chief support! But the belief of the immortality of the soul has been from the first implanted by the Creator in every brain of man, of philosopher, sage, and poet, of every woman that has parted with one she loves.

The universality of this faith, its removal from all claims to special favor of revelation, its needing no miracles, nor prophecies, nor any of the common enginery of religious schemes to enforce belief, shows that it is an inseparable part of man's rationality. There is no such ever-living proofs of any, nor of all religious revelations, as this self-generating doctrine of life beyond

the tomb. It stands on higher grounds than all others. It is not the gospel according to some one unknown to us, nor the epistle of any distant writer ; but it is the gospel of God inwoven in every soul individually : therefore every one believes, and his faith can not be shaken. It is true that the manner of our future life is left to the varying fancies of our minds. Not one of our theories can be mapped out so as to present a practical entirety.

“ Divines but peep on undiscovered worlds,
And draw the distant landscape as they please ;
But who has e’er returned from these bright regions,
To tell their manners, or relate their laws ? ”

It is highly probable that the fashion of after-life is beyond man’s capacity to comprehend. It would be like trying to explain logarithms to a horse, or to get him to understand the mystery of our giving a sack of oats in exchange for a bit of printed paper.

But we may hope, by study, to arrive at some better definition than our popular conceptions, now so vague. The coming age will not rest content with any vague imaginings. The purpose of a resurrected body, with organs scarcely adapted to the popular suppositions of the new life, must be made more apparent. Some concessions will be exacted ; and the sooner they are made the smaller will be the changes. Very small timely concessions would have prevented the Lutheran revolution. We should run no risk of shaking the foundations of so blessed a belief, so indispensable to our happiness, by weighting it down with impossible conditions. This priceless panacea for the evils of life should be made secure by every means that human reason can command.

GOSPEL CHANGES.

Had our four gospels been miraculous in their origin, which means above the laws of nature, they should show evidence of it by immunity from the corruptions incident to natural productions. Indeed, they ought to be miraculously accordant in narrative, in quotations of words from the Saviour's lips, in so stating doctrine as to be miraculously well understood, and beyond disputation. The Trinity, the Godship of Jesus, their own miraculous inspiration, the nature of the atoning redemption, and so forth, should have been miraculously well stated; and, particularly, it should not have been possible for mere natural talent to surpass their miraculous power in this respect. The offspring should show its parentage, or how can we be asked to believe? We can not but admit that the Gospels show no such signs of miraculous origin. The Thirty-nine Articles, for instance, give contradiction to the assumption; for their avowed purpose is to provide a better human revelation than the divine revelation. Had the divine been explicit, as they conceive it should have been, their improvement would not have been necessary. The human corrections and additions are necessitated by the imperfect words of the divine Revelator!

This imperfection, history informs us, was so much felt by the custodians of the Gospel manuscripts, that alterations of words, subtraction of sentences, and interpolations of words and sentences, were continually being

made. For thirty years after the death of Jesus, his discourses, his doctrines, and his alleged miracles, were trusted solely to the memory of people, who, Jesus complained, were constantly misapprehending him. They were ignorant people, who had no knowledge of writing, and therefore they made no notes. Paul refers every thing to their traditions, as yet more reliable than any writings.

In our age of greater education, when a few days intervene, no two out of a score of witnesses can agree in their statements. Let a month, one year, two years, elapse, and we do not expect any thing but contradiction. "What he said, and you said, and I said, and somebody else said," makes inextricable fog and uncertainty, as Lord Palmerston declared to be well-known experience. How can we expect verbal accuracy after a lapse of thirty years? How can we expect that persons engaged in making religious doctrines for many years could avoid the natural tendency of theology to make the text conform to the doctrine? All our sectaries, and every preacher of to-day, however conscientious, does this by interpretations, by passing certain texts, and by showing partiality to others. And if they lived before printing, and were intrusted with a new transcription, the same spirit would prompt them to the same liberty with the manuscript.

Our ecclesiastical historians agree, that not only in the dark ages, but in the earliest period of Christianity, unbridled liberties were taken with the records; and our highest divines pronounce whole epistles doubtful and spurious, which are, even now, among ours as genuine. Thousands of various readings are pointed out by a

powerful Christian association, that is now engaged in making a new translation. But, be the translation never so perfect, there will be a sad want, viz., the unification of the Gospel history, so that we may have but one Gospel, with such evidences as are best vouched for, and most credible to reason, and most consistent ; dropping such as can better be dispensed with. No fair reading of the first part of Luke can fail to satisfy us that this is what the evangelist did, viz., From many Gospels he made one, embracing all he considered authentic. There is, at this time, yet stronger need for us to imitate the example of the evangelist. Christianity would have profited, had it been content with Luke's Gospel alone, according to its intended purpose of superseding all others.

The tendency of this age is to concentration. Concentrated essences of every thing in medicine, to get at the curative principles ; concentration of contending corporations ; concentrations by the factory system. We are abridging all works of science ; we are concentrating education by public schools, we are simplifying instruction in every department. The aim is to give the pupil a radical knowledge, and not superficial. Can we keep religious instruction from the same tendency ? A concentrated essence of the teachings of Jesus would do as much for the diffusion of sound Christianity, as the like concentration has done elsewhere.

HOW SHALL WE REVIEW THE DOGMAS OF INTERPRETATION?

“Beware of the scribes and Pharisees!”

If it be desirable that we of this age shall examine for ourselves the dogmas which a darker age conceived to be found in Scripture, that we may also judge of their authority, how shall we proceed?

Religion was not made for theologians, but for all men. In proportion as theology prevails, true piety and practical religion fade away. We can conceive no worse way to get fair interpretation of the Scripture, than to refer it to a council of men learned in theology. Jesus taught no theology but the simple fatherhood of God, and the sonship of all men of godly life. To interpret such religion, we want men of common sense, and no theology. Theology binds men by seated interests, and by pre-judgment of early training, so that it would be their hardest task to bring to the work a candid spirit or an honest simplicity.

So far from this, what is the habit of conventions of men learned in science and theology? Every man has his theory beforehand, and this it is his instinct to support. It is his pride to distinguish himself as a man of great penetration, by discovering something new which nobody else had ingenuity to see. Not what a text plainly says, but what ingenious construction may make it seem to mean, is the work of such conventions. To this instinctive emulation for sagacity, we owe all the dogmas of Christianity which Jesus did not preach.

Warnings enough were given by the apostles, that men would arise who would substitute false doctrines for the truth. This pride of being learned, rather than devoutly honest, has generated most of the metaphysical dogmas that do violence to the reason of this age, which embarrass our religion, and fertilize the growth of infidelity. If we have been led astray by theologic councils, we should get judges from a different class to give us safer guidance hereafter.

Protestants repudiate the Council of Trent, that condemned their doctrines; yet they bow to the similar councils of Nice and Constantinople, that condemned the doctrine of the unity of God, and adopted the three personal Gods, metaphysically making one Deity, according to the heathen. • Is there any reason why we may not review these councils, as well as the Council of Trent? Let us pray that, in the review that is surely coming, if we do not compel more than a review, we may have sense, instead of subtlety, in the reviewers. Let us hope that what is no longer possible of belief will be interpreted out, as it was interpreted in; and that nothing will be substituted without the assurance that it will meet with acceptance from the great reasoning mind of the age, which we are educating to examine, and hold fast what passes the ordeal of critical investigation. If faith is to take root, it must be adjusted to the intellect of the age.

The great inquiry should be, “Will people give it hearty faith?” That Christianity may take on new life, be born again, and begin a new round of usefulness in the suppression of evil and the promotion of good, as well as in binding men in closer fellowship around an altar of greater unity and of warmer aspirations.

DISCREPANCIES REQUIRING REVIEW AND MORE PLAIN STATEMENT.

The mission of the Saviour, as stated by himself when he first proclaimed it (Luke iv. 18) in open synagogue, has the remarkable peculiarity of omitting the leading objects we attach to it. The Jews were expecting the Messiah, but he did not claim that office. He did not announce that he came to offer himself a sin-offering for all mankind. He claimed to be a prophet anointed by God to preach the gospel to the poor, &c. He did not claim to be miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost. On the contrary, when the people intimated, that, being a son of Joseph the carpenter, they could not receive him as a prophet, instead of denying the paternity, he said it was a proverb, that where a man's parentage is known he is never received as a prophet.

Here was an occasion where it seems incredible that he did not correct their mistake, and thus remove the obstacle to faith. It is proof, that, during the thirty years of his life, the neighbors who knew him and his father, and his father, mother, sisters, and brothers, who are named by them in another place, never had heard of this son being generated differently from the rest. From what source did Luke discover it, thirty years after his death, if nobody in Nazareth knew it?

It is almost proof that some after-writer added it to Luke's Gospel; for Luke could not have let this singu-

lar silence on such an occasion pass without a reason for it, had he known of the miraculous conception. Certainly it was not Christ's gospel preached by himself at that time. Yet it was exactly the fit occasion to make the announcement. But he never announced it at any time. It is not given us by himself at all; and it is therefore of inferior authenticity, especially as half of the evangelists omit it, considering their Gospels perfect without it. In Matt. xi. 11, Jesus could not so undervalue himself, as to say that no one ever was born superior to John the Baptist.

John Baptist (Matt. xi. 3, Luke vii. 9) is represented as having sent messengers to Christ to know if he claimed to be the Messiah. This casts doubt upon the story of the Holy Spirit's proclamation before John at the baptism, and of John's compliments. John could not have inquired of what he had already been told by Heaven.

To fulfill the terms of prophecy, one of the main things Jesus was urged to do was to relieve the Jews of the Roman government that ruled over them, and to set himself up as King of Israel. He acknowledged that this was his mission; and he assured them that he would fulfill it, and then he would make his disciples rulers over Israel. He began by telling people to refuse to pay tribute to the Roman government. John xi. 48 shows that people were alarmed that his revolutionary speeches would bring destruction upon the Jewish people. Luke says some advised him to go away and be still, or Herod would kill him. He defied Herod, claiming to be a prophet of Israel, and beyond perishing in that way. John xi. 48 says that the high priest was

alarmed, and conceived the idea of appeasing the anger of the Roman government by at once delivering Jesus up, "for it is expedient that one man should die for the people, so that the whole nation do not perish." Jesus was alarmed at this threat, and fled into concealment.

So far as the ordinary reading goes, this appears to be the origin of the idea that he was to die for all mankind, — one man to be a ransom for all.

Luke xiii. 35 says Jesus promised to be present himself in three days, when they should say, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew gives this in a different connection. Luke xix. 11 says the new kingdom would be immediately proclaimed at Jerusalem.

It appears from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that every preparation was made for the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; and people were provided with palm-branches to place in the road for him to ride over after the manner of conquerors. An ass was provided and drapery, and on this he was mounted. All his followers gathered in force, and proclaimed him king, as he passed in triumph, with hosannahs, exclaiming, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord!" Luke says some were greatly alarmed at this attempted revolt, and appealed to him to put a stop to their proclamation. He declined; for, if the people should cease, the very stones would proclaim him King. John shows us, that Jesus, finding the thing did not succeed, fled and concealed himself. The four evangelists agree that this revolution was attempted in the way we state.

After the failure of this attempt, Jesus saw that he would have to pay the penalty of the law by crucifixion;

and he knew his disciples so well that he plainly told them that they would deny him, and leave him to his fate. Judas may have partaken of the fear that pervaded the Jews generally, and let Jesus know his disapproval of the revolutionary attempt, as he had before chided him for wasting costly ointment upon his person. Jesus knew Judas was against him. This explains how Judas may have taken the view of those who thought it best to let Jesus suffer the penalty of the law, and thus save the whole Jewish nation from suffering on account of his imprudence. The abandonment makes it probable that every one of the other disciples took the same view. Judas is accused of having shown the place where Jesus usually was at night, though certainly well known. The rest appear to have feared to testify in favor of Jesus at his trial ; for they denied having his acquaintance, lest it might involve them as accomplices. Their attempts to make out what Judas did as worse than their own behavior seems to be to cover their own disgrace. Between them, fair comparison fails to see any such extravagant disproportions as have become popular. Each one helped in his own way the fatal result of a common and equally disgraceful apostacy and desertion.

A French philosopher says the gibbet is a species of flattery. Now and then we hang a man to make the rest of us believe we are virtuous. Judas appears to have been morally gibbeted to make eleven associate apostles appear innocent.

John says Judas abandoned Jesus because he lost faith in his Master. Jesus says Judas had to do this for the fulfillment of the prophecy. It appears that

Judas was the only one who did not deny having been a disciple. It is not unlikely, that, being the best known, he was obliged by the officers of the law to go with them and identify Jesus. It is again mentioned, that people said it was best to let one man be given up to save the nation from the wrath of the Romans. (On account of the attempted insurrection.)

The attempted revolution makes it clear that Jesus admitted it to be a requirement of prophecy that the Messiah should deliver the Jews from bondage to Rome, and that he should be their temporal king, as David was. It explains literally what was meant by the new kingdom, and the office of judges promised to his disciples. It is remarkable, that, while the disciples left him to his fate, Pilate alone did all he could to save him, apparently trying to make light of the insurrectionary movement, as weak and fanatical.

If we read it as other histories, Jesus did not, in the crucifixion, offer himself as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of the world. For it is argued, that, but for Judas, he would have escaped. And he prayed that God would let him escape the threatened infliction. Even on the cross he seemed to have faith that God would yet save him; and finding no prospect, at last complained aloud that God also had forsaken him. (Matthew and Mark.) What he suffered for was clearly stated and briefly written upon his cross; viz., because he attempted to revolutionize the government, and make himself king of the Jews. "We have no king but Cæsar," was the cry. It is clearly shown that his crucifixion was far from being voluntary. With all our reverence for his character and doctrines, we find no

sufficient evidence that he believed himself miraculously generated, nor that the orthodox doctrine of the atonement is justified by the narrative. His life was a forced expiation of his own legal crime against the State, which others promoted to save the nation from a general calamity, which his acts were likely to bring upon them all if not so expiated.

Heb. v. 2, 3 informs us that Jesus had his weaknesses, and that his crucifixion was to expiate his own sins, as well as those of the people.

We can not find from the narrative any reason to doubt that it was fear, and not malice, that induced the Jews to urge his execution.

We are obliged to concede that the abandonment of his disciples makes it impossible that they could have believed Jesus was God incarnate. They believed, no doubt, that he was the promised Messiah, which was to be a man from the loins of David ; but even this belief was shaken when the attempted proof so signally failed, and cost him his life. As the history stands, the career of Jesus, and all his miracles and prophetic references, ended in failure to secure belief, even in his nearest, most attached, and longest instructed : they who saw all the miracles were, after all, the greatest infidels ! And Peter, the chief, added oaths to his recantations, to show himself the greatest infidel of them all ! It shows that all the miracles were of no account for their alleged purpose of creating certain belief in the mission of Jesus. It confirms suspicion that they are legendary fabrications.

We thus present the case in order that the necessity may appear for a review of our four gospels, and for

the formation of one new and condensed gospel, which will present a better show of probability, and a better foundation for whatever new dogmas may be originated to replace those which have gone into and are going into general disbelief. That we may have better unity and stronger faith in some acceptable doctrines, for the better repression of evil, and promotion of good.

INCREDIBLE LEGENDS.

If, from whatever cause, a historian has evidently been led into one error, his whole narrative invites review.

The story of the temptation of Jesus by the Devil is of this character. Here, evil is invested with personality. The shrewdness of Satan is belied by making him as silly as to suppose he could get Jesus to believe in his ownership of the earth, and that any thing could tempt the Son of God to worship the father of lies. The nameless mountain, exceedingly high, from which the Devil showed all the kingdoms of the world at a glance, is an impossibility.

The story is clearly a legend, which was in some extant tradition known to all the evangelists.

Mark shows sounder judgment than others, by rejecting the impossible particulars. John refused it even mention. But Matthew and Luke evince defect of judgment, by copying it with all its impossibilities, without the excuse of any purpose effected. Let us hope that

the amplifications are interpolated. Theology seeks to cover the impossible, by saying that all the kingdoms of the world mean the land of Judea. This evasion would turn the Deluge into a small affair. It makes a mockery of all revelation. It takes from all gospel words that fixed and certain significance, without which there is no meaning to revelation. If ever our gospels are reconstructed, Christianity will gain by omitting this offense to reason, this stumbling-block to faith; together with the story of the Devil in the swine, and others of like incredible character and aimless purpose. If we can not plead interpolation, we can give them conversion by interpretation.

THE ATONEMENT.

The doctrine of the atonement is not in the Gospels, as it is in our theology. We have shown plainly what Jesus died for. The effect of the doctrine of atonement we believe to be of questionable good. If we hope to shirk personal responsibility by the sufferings of some innocent person in our stead, it is hard to see how this hope advances virtue or represses vice. The Hebrew prophets repudiated the Mosaic dogma from which ours confesses derivation, and in its stead substituted a better, viz., every soul shall suffer for its own sins.

No reasoning, and no respect for old notions, can ever reconcile the contradictions involved in our dogma. Divested of theologic obfuscation, it amounts to this:—

1st, The children in your neighborhood have been always offending you.

2d, Your anger can only be appeased in one way, — by sending your only son to be murdered by them !

3d, If they cap their crimes by this additional crime, you will pardon the miscreants for ever after !

If this were told as a tale of satisfied vengeance, obtained by the miscreants for your angry denunciations, it would be intelligible.

The dogma of sacrificial atonement is expressly complained of by many of our highest divines as a stumbling-block to honest faith ; and as it surely is not essential to make men good, nor to repress evil, we may safely reconsider its claims to being scripture truth. Every dogma that serves doubtful purpose staggers belief, uses up time and talent to defend, and stands in the way of more profitable doctrine that may be substituted. And, in this age of infidelity, we need to prove *all* things, and retain only what will command general faith and effective conversion.

IGNORED DOCTRINES AND EXAMPLES OF JESUS.

“ If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

We offer some examples to prove that it has always been the practice of Christianity, as it is and ever will be of all religions, to cull out from the Gospels whatever we find inconvenient of belief or practice. This license begets another, viz., the invention of new doctrines by cunning veneering and varnishing of scripture phrases. It goes to show that religion is for man's varying spirit-

ual aspirations, and must be subservient to such changes; that it is no irreverence for an enlightened age to dismiss dogmas which have served the religious purposes of peoples in ages of ignorance long gone by; that the law of progressive development is inherent also in religion, and that its permanence depends on the wise foresight we exercise in making it conform to the spirit of the age.

Metempsychosis. — It is evident that the apostles were taught by Jesus that the souls of men, after having lived in one body, enter into new bodies in this world, and live over again. Matt. xvi., Mark viii., Luke ix., give proof of this. And Matt. xi. 13, 14 confirms it; also Matt. xvii. 23, Mark ix. 11, 13.

Jesus said that John Baptist was Elias come back to earth, according to the prophecy which required this literal fulfillment. We have no dogma so easy to make out as this of the transmigration of the soul, nor any that so invites us. But it does not suit us; so we ignore it. Repeatedly has Jesus told the people that he would perform no miracles; that he could only give them spiritual bread, and not bread for bodily food. Many times we find him telling people that they must not tell of his being Messiah; yet we believe he did miracles, and their object was to make known what he desired not to be known. If we are to retain our present faith regarding these matters, and revision be admissible, consistency would be gained by some amendments to the record.

If there is any thing strikingly clear, Jesus, according to Matthew, in his Sermon upon the Mount (chapter 5), pronounces against Moses and his doctrine, as not au-

thorized by the God who inspired Jesus. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of olden time, an eye for an eye, &c. ; but I say unto you," &c. He proclaims that the law of God is the opposite to the law of Moses. He virtually condemns Moses, and the whole religion founded upon his false doctrines ; and he confirms it by giving new and opposite doctrines for our guidance, which necessitate repudiation and unbelief in Moses. There are six counts in the indictment. Luke, probably from delicacy to the Jews, refused to give these denunciations of Moses a place in his record of the new teaching. But he tells us that the laws of Moses and the prophets lapsed when John announced the new religion of the kingdom of God. (Luke xvi. 16.)

Jesus, however, when asked to name the commandments to be kept, selected some of the Mosaic, and adopted them in his new religion, thus repudiating the rest. The sabbath-day law is ejected from the list. (Matt. xix. 18 ; Mark x. 19 ; Luke xviii. 20.) If we were so disposed, we have here stronger justification than for other dogmas, if not a clear command, to relieve Christianity from the dead weight of Judaism, which, like trying to make a new house out of an old one, brings us no profit, but continual contradiction and embarrassment.

But the selections of Christ do not satisfy theology, because he put away the sabbath, and theology thinks he should not have done so. Jesus taught and practiced community of goods : we laugh at the few sects of Christians, that, in conscience, try to follow his example. He spoke kindly of circumcision, as being older than Moses, and he was himself so treated ; but we do not fancy the institution, though it was taught by St. Peter, his chief

disciple, and extensively practiced, as a part of his religion, by the earliest Christians.

“ Why call ye me Lord, and do not what I say ? ”

From the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. and vi.), we extract some further laws, from the mouth of Jesus himself, which we have entirely repudiated. In fact, to speak truthfully and plainly, we do condemn them as impracticable; and, doing so, we condemn him and his celestial claims. It is a denial of his divine wisdom and authority, viz.: —

1. Evil must not be resisted nor returned.
2. Oaths must not be taken.
3. We must love our enemies the same as our friends: for God treats alike the just and the unjust; and, if we do the same, we shall all be sons of God.
4. No Christian must offer up (prayer or other) gift to God while he has enmity with any one. He must first settle his quarrels, and then pray.
5. No Christian must save money, but spend as he goes.
6. Nor must Christian people care about what dress they wear!
7. If charity is given, you must carefully abstain from mentioning it even to intimate friends; and take care that it is not published.
8. A Christian prayer must be short. Let heathens make long prayers, telling in detail their wants. But the Christian must consider that God knows all his wants. Therefore prayer should be confined to about sixty-five words according to Matthew, and less according to Luke.

9. Who marries a woman once divorced, committeth adultery. — Matt. v. 32, and xix. 9; Luke xvi. 18; Mark x. 11.

10. Christians must lend their money without taking interest. — Luke vi. 34, 35.

11. A new commandment is added, without which no man can be perfected for heaven: "Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor."

12. To these condemned commandments may be added another; viz., that given to the apostles to practice washing each other's feet (in token of love and humility). — John xiii. 14 only. The Emperor of Austria performs this duty yearly in public. The command to practice the communion rests also on the authority of only one evangelist (Luke xxii. 19).

To this list we may add a doctrine of the greatest consequence, given by Mark xi. 25, 26, most clearly, viz.: That all men will be forgiven their sins when they forgive the offenses of their fellow-men; and that, until this is done, no man can be saved.

Some of the dogmas that now form the pillars of popular faith might be profitably withdrawn to make place for this doctrine. If all our leading dogmas could be suppressed for a time, and this last were to be enforced by all the power of eloquence idly expended on them, let it not be doubted that we should be a better people, more creditable to Christianity, more ennobling to ourselves, and more acceptable to God. Jesus surely left us neither example nor authority for the forms and ceremonies, the reading-system of prayers and sermons, so inferior to his examples, nor for our system

of educating boys to be apostles of his religion, instead of selecting from inspired talent that offers ; nor yet for our mode of salaries. But his example does not suit us, and we find ourselves obliged to substitute systems quite at variance with his. Jesus not only taught, but required, us to repudiate and desert our parents, or we can not be Christians. We have not deferred to his commands. We should entreat badly any one who would venture to follow his doctrine in this particular. Peter, Paul, Barnabas, James, John, and Diotrophes, and many others, when Christian doctrines were fresh from the lips of Jesus, assumed each to make out contending doctrines from the same religious source, to suit the different peoples they had to convert. For centuries after, it was also the practice, to the time of the ecclesiastic councils, that, amid much contention, enforced a certain uniformity. But the many subdivisions of sectaries thereafter shows, that, after all, Christians will instinctively invent their own doctrines.

We might enlarge this enumeration ; but we have given enough for our purpose, which is to show, that as our religion has always allowed latitude for the accommodation of doctrine to the instinctive demands of the times and of the peoples, that it is our privilege and our duty to keep alive religious faith and efficiency by similar provisions. When we find the gales of progress carrying away the people, should we let our religion stay fast at the deserted anchorage ? Rather should we not hasten to weigh the anchor, crowd sail, and make for the new port to which the commerce is being transferred ?

“ We must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.”—SHAKSPEARE.

THE TEST OF TRUE RELIGION.

“Pure religion before God is this, — to visit the widow and the fatherless, and to keep unspotted from the world.” — JAS. i. 27.

St. Paul says, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Be ever ready to give reasons for your belief.

The apostle believed, and therefore he invited free inquiry. It is the pewter shilling that fears inspection, the counterfeit note that shrinks from scrutiny. If there be any universal law to give safe decision between truth and error, it is this, viz., that one invites the light, the other courts the shade. The true diamond suffers never from excess of light. The greater the light and the scrutiny, the more the luster proves the jewel. So the rosy cheek of beauty, the exuberant hair and pearly teeth of Nature, do court the gaze of men. But where art doth counterfeit Nature, how impertinent the gaze of scrutiny, how unpardonable the suspicion it betrays !

Every thing that is true in the realms of the Creator, from the starry heavens to the tiniest shell of the deep, invites our scrutiny : the closer we look, the more we admire.

It is a fixed maxim in science and philosophy, that free discussion is the safeguard of truth ; that error is fostered when reason is not free to expose it.

Theologians hold the same doctrine to be applicable, in its fullest extent, to the moral maxims and the plainly-spoken doctrines of our Saviour. These become brighter by every ray of light which discussion can throw upon

them. But there is a class of dogmas which all publishing-houses combine, under pressure of the Church, to shield from discussion. These are doctrines which Christ did not formulate, and that can only be formulated by expressions which are not to be found in Scripture. And they are precisely the causes of the infidelity and intolerance which condemn the tree by the evil fruit it bears. The test of true religion is its love of light; the test of counterfeit religion is its love of darkness. By these tests the judgment of this age will try them.

Thanks be to God, we can separate the two elements. We can eject what shrinks from the test of truth; and certainly we can do it without parting with a single precept that is conducive to virtue. In consigning the counterfeit to the shade it courts, we consign to oblivion all cause of uncharitable dissension, we conquer unbelief, and we give new life and unity to fervent Christianity. We do not believe that the clearly-spoken portion of God's truth which invites inquiry is not a safe guide to lead us to the gates of heaven.

TURNING EVIL INTO GOOD.

“Who hath not known ill fortune, never knows
Himself nor his own virtue.”

In the autumn of 1857, “a crisis” in America, which made sudden changes in fortune, overshadowed our own pretentious mansion.

“God of the just, thou gavest the bitterness :
We bowed to thy behest, and drank it up.”

The first shock passed with habitual philosophy ; we made survey of our new position ; and, after the manner of Jeremy Taylor, we took account of what was left.

As the enumeration went on, we were amazed to find how much the gain surpassed the loss. And it began to be evident that loss of fortune is not ruin.

The light heart, the kindly smile, the cheerful spirit, we had cut, called to renew the acquaintance. The innocent prattle that was a disturber of calculation became again cherub-music to the ear ; and hearts that mammon cares had kept distant drew closer than before. Sure we must have erst been deaf to sweet sounds, or our caged songsters greeted us with matin welcome more joyous than of yore. Our faithful dog, too, — surely his caresses were ardent beyond their measure.

Appetite asked, What's o'clock ? and the bankrupt-list gave no poison to our breakfast. No one owed us any thing ! Long-banished sleep came back, and with it dreams of pleasure without its gilded cares. Our wakening became refreshing, restored health our hand-maid ; digestion waited on appetite, our nerves grew firm, and equanimity resumed its scepter.

Going forth, we found the broad earth open as ever to our walks, its fields more green, its flowers sweeter, than aforetime.

The sunshine, the starry heavens, the balmy air, the music of running water, the song of birds, the gambols of youngling herds, seedtime and harvest, and a confiding trust in heaven, — all these still were ours, with quickened senses to know their worth. And as specta-

tors, tenfold greater than our own jaunting, we enjoyed the crowded pageant, as it rolled along the circuit, each equipage apparently putting on its best for our gratification.

In happy mood we thought of the many times we had said in our troubled heart, we would give our fortune to known again that health and peace of mind which had forsaken us. And now the blessing has come, shall we not rate it at its value? What if the gold is gone! the copper left buys more enjoyment.

Put us back where we were, and, had we a million, we would so invest it to pay an interest like this.

Before God, were it offered to-day, we should refuse to re-exchange the blessings we have gained for the gold we have lost, in this lottery of life.

They have taken but trifles, and, instead, have left us treasures. Thus wisely seen, doth Providence send apparent evils for our greater good.

Good friend! Give sometime study to the unwritten laws of heaven, and you will have a new revelation more valuable than the old.

The word of God speaks daily to his children. If they will but hearken, it will reveal the secret of contentment, which no pulpit preaches.

Believe not that the word of God is a fount which was exhausted time ago; but be assured it is a spring which floweth ever, and he who lists may drink. Who drinks it freshest finds most healing in its waters; and, better than from theology, seek from the hand of God himself the living waters of his grace!

Thou art a child of God; thy soul is of his breath. Ask of thy Father, day by day, and his revelations will

have no ending, nor will they need the speech of man to give them understanding.

Then be assured, that, when evil comes, the bitter chalice will turn to sweetness on thy grateful lips !

DIVERSION OF EVIL.

“ An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Physical evils we are content to take as established laws, — floods, lightning, and epidemics. We do not resort to prayer, nor to legislation, in hopes of changing the climate of England, or of forcing the sun to shine more brightly. Instead of fighting the elements, we divert them. By draining, we divert the flood ; by conducting-rods, we divert the lightning from our path ; and, by disinfectants, we avert miasma from the lungs.

If physical evils are elements in the constitution of the earth, there must be conforming moral disturbances. A man's morals are inseparably connected with his brain-work. Put brandy in his head, and this will appear.

If it be the task of governments to cure the disease of crime, why is it not worthy of their thoughts to treat moral evils by the same avertive means that prove successful in physical ?

In Paris, the prevention of crime is a science which has been brought to a high degree of perfection. The city is covered with moral lightning-rods. Highway robbers, housebreakers, pickpockets, street-rowdies,

drunkards, beggars, ruffians, are almost unknown. Even cabmen find it their interest to be honest ; so that, if you leave behind any thing of value, you will almost surely find it at the prefecture of police next day.

As an iron ship turns forked into sheet lightning, by giving it diffusion, so Paris, by having wine in cheap and plentiful flow over all, gives to the tippling appetites of men harmless gratification. Every man, every woman, drinks ; but none stagger.

The government makes it a primary duty to supply amusements in such variety, abundance, and cheapness, that everybody finds something to win him from grumbling solitude to happy thoughts and cheerful chattering. In out-door amusements this general exhilaration is shown in the universal disposition to be pleased with every thing and every body ; so that a glass of weak country wine suffices to bring one's spirits to the oblivion of care, which in England would require deep potations of brandy.

This great moral conservation finds its largest and most valuable dispensation on Sunday, because on that day most people find the only opportunity of receiving it. Alas for the toiling millions of England, that by departing from the faith of their fathers, and of all other Christians in Europe, the vice-breeding austerity of the Mosaic sabbath has been brought back from the banishment to which Christ consigned it ; and the innocent diversion which the Saviour won for their weary-laden souls is taken from them by misguided public sentiment ! Let them be assured, that, till they compel the restoration of their rights of enjoying Sunday recreation and anti-drinking diversion, they will remain,

as now, a proverb among nations, — stuffy, grumbling, quarreling, drinking Englishmen !

We have said that Paris succeeded in the prevention of certain leading crimes. But Paris furnishes at the same time a curious illustration of this truth, viz., that evil is a providential provision, necessary to give propulsion to the moral world, as centrifugal force is to drive the globe in its circuit.

There is just enough, be assured, for this service, and no more. The Creator is a perfect mechanic, and proportions every power with nicety to its purpose. He makes every branch of his works correct its own oscillations as it goes along. The equilibrium of moral evil which is disturbed in Paris by this moral draining and conducting is restored and counterbalanced by an equivalent increase of small peccadilloes and peculations. Evil is not diminished ; but the wicked-looking flood which is drained off from one direction is transmuted into less terrible forms, and redistributed by Satan, on the Frenchman's own principles. Instead of big evils, confined to a certain number of transgressive agents, there is minute subdivision into smaller evils, of which every one takes a share. Thus a distribution is made of the functions of evil, which better equalizes the commission. As the iron ship takes from the thunderbolt its destructive force by flattening it out into sheet-lead, instead of balls as it were, so this process turns concentrated crimes into expansive peccadilloes. It is a famishing hunger shared off into a hundred little appetites ; consumption averted by free and copious expectoration.

There is a vast deal less of what is termed robbery

in Paris ; but from the cook to the highest dignitary, from the huckster to the silk-mercant, there is a universal system of small cheating, almost nullified, however, by politeness.

In social life, the moral world, deprived of needful propulsion by turning off the larger evils, obtains an equivalent excitation from the universal and unceasing activity of sub-crinoline involutions. From the chiffonier to the minister at the altar, every one has his affair of the heart ; and maidens are rarer than black swans. The social evil that runs riot in London is in Paris perfectly enfolded by law ; so that, while it affords to society all the protection that is its design, it is deprived of its repulsive features without, and of its retributive severity within.

French transmutations of evil have this advantage, viz., that they give less offense to the conscience. With as much moral decorum as possible, the little wants and natural twitchings of human weakness are met half-way, and so compromised, that under the assuaging of universal custom, which holds that all Nature's calls are alike entitled to response, the confessional does not class among the catalogue of mortal sins what we consider the awfulest of all. A French lady excuses a priest for intimacy with her cousin : " Poor priests ! you know they can't marry ; so, of course, they are obliged to have other arrangements."

SOCIAL EVILS OF WOMEN.

Modern Christianity is behind some other extant religions in the moral science of converting evil into good. The Church gives itself over to theory over much, and too little to practical means of making people content and happy in their social relations.

The present condition of the women of Christendom is an example. If our religion would do for society what it seems reasonable to ask, we should not have been allowed to drift into the present terrible social misarrangement, which shuts out women from wedlock, and keeps them ever in straitened employment and necessitous temptation.

Religious contrivance, administration, and emolument are altogether in the hands of men: they preach to women subjection, faith, and sustenance of the Church. They inveigh against their innocent fashions and frivolities, and give them only long-dated promises of betterment, after their life-struggles have worried them into the tomb.

Is it impracticable to make our religion an improvement on others, in at least one thing, by incorporating into it some system for the social advancement of women?

We will not believe it. Rather will we pronounce it a defect, a sin, and a shame of modern Christianity, that it finds no correction of this great social and spiritual evil. And we present it to the consideration of all good men, with an earnest prayer that they give their minds to the correction.

Resignation is indeed a great transmuter of evil ; but of this women have from nature more than their share, while in men our religion does almost nothing for its cultivation. Here and there it is mixed up in theologic sermons perhaps ; but there is no system of practical and convincing appeal to men's understanding, which teaches the true doctrine, that material losses, properly considered, are in general spiritual gains.

Not until the teachers of religion themselves understand the true providence of evil, and get rid of the erroneous ideas they so unprofitably hold regarding its providential purposes, can they be qualified for the task.

THE MISCHIEF OF OUR GLOOMY SUNDAY.

“ Let no man judge you respecting sabbath days.” — ST. PAUL.

Experience proves the utility of one day of recreation in every seven. Nature has marked the night as the appropriate time for *rest* ; and for rest alone, it is sufficient. But, for recreation, the day is the time. The working multitude have no day except Sunday. “ But that is the sabbath ! ”

What law forbids innocent recreation on the sabbath ? No law of the Old Testament or of the New. The founder of our religion rebuked the strictness imposed by the Jews in its observance, even in respect to labor. His office was to give us a new dispensation, a new religion, to take the place of the old which he denounced.

If we do all that Jesus commanded as necessary to

salvation, it will be admitted that we do quite enough ; and he who manufactures additions to the Saviour's commandments is infidel and apostate. Let him be accursed who forges an additional sin to the catalogue, making that a crime which is in itself innocent. Such a one is, of all traitors and infidels, the most sacrilegious contemner of the gospel of Christ.

Now, there is no commandment in the New Testament to abstain from work on Sunday, nor to keep it otherwise than other days, nor to transfer the Jewish sabbath to Christianity at all. On the contrary, in Luke xviii. 20, Jesus names all the commandments necessary to salvation : no sabbath is among them. They are repeated in Matt. xxx. 18, 19, without the sabbath ; Rom. xiii. 8, 9, and xiv. 4, 5, enumerates all, and says there are no more ; but no sabbath ! Acts xv. 24-28, and xxi. 25, expressly declares what portion of the Mosaic law is to be retained : the sabbath is omitted. St. Paul, in Tit. i. 10, 11, complains of Christian priests for preaching up Jewish austerities for filthy lucre. St. Paul goes further : he cautions us to allow no man to impose the sabbath upon us. (Coloss. xi. 19.) This passage Bishop White pronounced decisive against any sabbath being obligatory upon us. Archbishop Paley, Archbishop Whately, Bishops Aylmar, Warburton, Ironsides, and many other high ecclesiastical authorities, gave the same decision.

The Nestorians and the Armenians, who are the oldest sects of Christianity, and who have ever lived nearest to its cradle in Palestine, are least likely to stray far from its primitive teachings, especially as they are not a changeful people. These people observe "the Lord's day" as

a holy day, on Sunday, but they do not call it sabbath. — REV. JUSTIN PERKINS.

Curiously enough, the English, and their descendants in America, who are the farthest removed from the first seat of Christianity, are the only Christians who apply the Jewish name and the Jewish law of Saturday to Sunday, the Lord's day.

Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, says, "You see the heavens are not idle, nor do they observe the sabbath. If before Abraham there was no need of sabbaths, so now, in like manner, there is no need of them since Christ." — SECT. xxiii.

We would kindly ask if these evidences are not sufficient to arouse the suspicions of pious minds, that we are enforcing a fabricated commandment, by forging the name of Jesus? If we are, a terrible sin lies at our door. So it behooves every man to look to it in earnest, that at the judgment he may answer to the dread charge of forging false doctrines upon Christianity.

Look in Blackstone's Commentaries (article Sunday), and you will find that Sunday was at that time a civil institution altogether; that the law prohibited work, but allowed innocent recreation and amusement, on Sunday.

It may be mentioned, that in all Christian countries (except England and the United States), embracing three-fourths of Christendom, the word "sabbath" is not in use except by Jews. Sunday is simply a holy day, given to devotion in the morning, and to recreation and amusement afterwards.

In the reigns of Charles I. and James I., the Judaism we practice was a schism in England.

The revival of the Jewish sabbath began A.D. 1595. A gloomy fanatic, named Dr. Bound, issued a book that pleased the vulgar, representing how grateful it would be to God if they would offer him the sacrifice of their amusements on Sunday. This curious superstition of giving to God what man wants most, and God least, has been an engine of mischief among the vulgar in all religions.

Unlike the Church to-day, the whole Church of that period took a stand against this robbery of the poor, to whose health and spirits they alleged that recreation on Sunday was an imperious necessity. The archbishop destroyed the edition. The lord chief justice forbade the printing, as "*teaching new dogmas unauthorized by our religion.*"

James I. saw with sorrow what terrible effect the gloomy perversion of Sunday had on the health and morals of the people, and he used every means to stop the progress of the schism. The contest was long and bitter among Sabbatarians, Moderates, and anti-Sabbatarians. Laud, the Bishop of London, took a decided stand against reviving the Jewish sabbath, after Christ had abolished it, and the Church had changed the day for public devotion, on purpose to prevent any such risk of Judaistic revival.

Seventy-two clergymen addressed a memorial to him, imploring him to protect the poor from the unholy robbery. But the Puritans worked with fanatic zeal, by day and by night, upon the superstitious prejudices of the vulgar, till they prevailed at last in fixing upon England the sacrilegious forgery of the commandments of Christ, which has brought with it a fearful retribution.

The dogma never found favor on the continent, where it is viewed as a painful evidence of how our religion runs to corruption ; so that it is confined to England and its colonies, America included.

Antiquity sanctions many a dogma which has been fastened upon our religion in much the same way ; but the spirit of inquiry is awakening, and, if candid Christians will examine this pernicious dogma, antiquity will not long screen other unchristian dogmas from inquiry into their origin.

This subject may be studied by consulting “ Thoughts upon the Sabbath,” by Archbishop Whately ; and the history of this corruption of Christianity may be found in Disraeli’s “ Charles I.,” vol. iii.

Before we rebuke our neighbor for taking pleasure on Sunday, it should be our duty to find in the mandates of Christ a commandment to justify the reflection. If it was desired that an institution of the paramount importance we attach to this should form a leading feature in Christianity, it is quite impossible that no commandment of the sort should have been given, that not even a hint of the kind should have been uttered by Jesus, or any of his apostles. And for the creation of a new day, and the transfer of the old austerities to it, not a shadow of authority is to be found.

There is one insuperable objection to the enforced engorgement of religion on one day. We appeal to all good Christians to say if the practical result is not to confine devotion to that one day, when confinement and restraint give us no chance to make practical application of its principles, and to withhold it from use on the six days, when it is in reality most needed, and when there is the largest scope for its exercise.

It is as if we should take all our pepper, salt, and seasoning on one day, and have our food without seasoning for its digestion during the rest of the week. The one is food for the body, the other for the soul. And they are so intimate and inseparable in their connection, that the analogy is perfect in its application. The body can not digest the condiments of a week in one day, and separate from the food that needs their daily distribution ; so the soul can not in one day digest the spiritual seasoning needed for its wants every day in the week.

Five times every day the Mussulman kneels, and offers up a prayer. What an example for the Christian !

But, so long as our system prevails, we shall continue to be coldly, dully, and tiresomely religious on one day, and exclusively worshipers of mammon and Satan on the other days, of the week.

Not all the preaching that man can take in and digest on one day can ever suffice to counteract the accumulated evil influences of six days devoted with tenfold fervor to adverse distractions.

Rather let religion be distributed where it can be utilized among all our working-days, and give up Sundays to innocent recreation, and to the cultivation of the social graces, which are hand-maidens of good nature, of practical piety, and of Christian benevolence and cheerfulness of heart.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH AT THE JUDGMENT.

If we engage in enforcing a law of our own making, and call it God's, we do a wickedness and a sacrilege that will heap condemnation on our souls.

If we at all use the words "the sabbath," we are bound by the Jewish commandment, and every man must give an account for his disobedience in not keeping Saturday. We may say, that, if we give to God one day in seven, he ought to be satisfied, and make no question. But the commandment allows no such latitude. There is a special reason given why the sabbath must be on the seventh day, and no other.

We remember an ideal dialogue between an English sabbatizing Christian and the heavenly Judge at the last day; which it may give profitable hint to reproduce on this occasion. He elected to be judged by the law of Christ.

Judge. — "There is a dark charge against you of persecution against the innocent recreations of your neighbors."

Sabbatizer. — "I was trying to make them keep the fourth commandment, according to Moses, — the sabbath."

Judge. — "That is Jewish, not Christian law. If you enforce a law upon your neighbor's conscience after I abrogated it, you have to answer for the sacrilege of forging my name to a law of your own devising."

Sabbatizer. — "It was the Church which devised and commanded it: it only changed the day God ap-

pointed, because the Jew's day was repugnant to its feelings."

Judge. — "The Church! it is a body without a soul. It has passed away, and is not at the judgment to answer. In vain you would pass your guilt upon a soulless creature. So, Eve! Warnings enough I gave you against the beguilements of innovation, teaching for lucre. At the judgment every man must answer for his own deeds. Christians are to be judged by the laws of Christ, not by the commandments of churches."

Sabbatizer. — "If I may seek my defense in the Christian Scriptures, I believe I shall be acquitted. You intimated that one day should not be more holy than another: you condemned the Jewish observance of the sabbath, and you gave no commandment for us to keep it."

Judge. — "It doubles your guilt to plead the repeal of a law which your life was spent in enforcing upon your neighbors. You invoked the law of Moses. If you are judged by his commandments, you worshiped mammon, instead of God, on the sabbath day. If you appeal to the law of Christ, you stand guilty of forging his name to a commandment that he did not give. He went to earth to loosen the bonds of the old law. You are guilty of refettering with them the toiling men, the burdened women, and the innocent children, taking from me the glory, and from them the blessings, of my redemption. Depart from me: your portion is with the unfaithful!"

We have wronged the poor of their rights to recreation; and, till we make restorations, we shall continue to be scourged by retributive Providence with the evils of discontent and intemperance.

THE UNIVERSE.

“The contemplation of celestial things makes us think more sublimely of Deity, and more justly of his moral government.” — CICERO.

Whatever may have been in past times the limits of theologic inquiry, they are about to be greatly enlarged by universal education. All extant religious conceptions are founded upon the assumption that this world alone is inhabited by intelligent life; that God's moral government is not, like his physical, a universal law, but only a law specially made for, and confined to, this planet. When we speak of special providences, of heaven and hell, of sins, of a day of judgment, of revelations, of incarnations of God, of moral evil, of schemes of salvation, and the like, we think they are only for this planet. Some even narrow down “the true religion” to one corner of the earth, denying that God has provided any religion for the rest. To magnify our own importance, we do great injustice to God, by making this little planet the great center and crowning glory of his creation, instead of an infinitesimal speck in the universe, as it is in reality.

We speak contemptuously of animals, and of “mere matter,” as though the Creator demeaned himself by making them; not considering that reverence is due to every thing the Almighty has sanctified by his touch. May we not conceive that every religious man should deem it his duty to study the physical revelations which God opens to our eyes; that we may know him better,

and have some intelligent check upon superstitions that tend to give low and unworthy conceptions of the Most High, to blind us to the wisdom of his moral laws, and to just conceptions of his impartial and all-pervading goodness ?

So far from the sun having been made to light this world, we get but the $\frac{1}{91,000,000,000,000,000}$ part of the light which he distributes through the sphere of this solar system. We are but one of many worlds which revolve in company, and are treated physically as we are ; being alike supplied with light, heat, atmospheres, moons, alternations of night and day, and (except Jupiter) with alternation of seasons.

Certainly, they are constituted equally with our planet for intelligent inhabitants : and whatever we are made for, they also ; for all are under one law, and get their manner of life from the sun as a common source. It is vainly to magnify ourselves to question this.

To put our claim in the scale of comparison, let us see what is our importance among our brother worlds. In numbers, there are about one hundred of us. Eight of us are of the following sizes : Taking the earth as one, Venus is very nearly the same ; Mercury nearly six-twentieths ; Jupiter is over one thousand four hundred times our size ; Saturn nearly eight hundred times ; Uranus eighty-six times ; Neptune seventy-six times. Then a multitude of smaller planets, which we will not count. There are, we will say, two thousand five hundred proportional planetary masses, of which this earth represents one in figures. Is it not arrogating to ourselves too much importance to claim that this one planet is alone the seat of intelligent life ? that, in all the others,

there is none to see and admire the great works of God? It looks like a little man on a big brag before men of easy credulity.

Let us consider the sun. If it were made for lighting us merely, what a needless waste of material! A very small fraction of its volume would have sufficed, as we have shown. There is volume enough in our sun to make one million four hundred and fifteen thousand of our earth. "Mere matter," we may call it: but it is almighty to us, — God's vicegerent plenipotentiary; and let us not condemn the devout Persian, who, instead of vacancy, contents himself with the belief that the great center, whence comes all light and every material gift we offer thanks for, is at least one throne, as it surely is one distributing entrepot, of the powerful beneficence of the great Creator.

To further enlarge our conceptions of the vastness of creation, to enable us to better judge of many of our imaginings regarding the government of this little planet and the purposes of man's being here, we will look beyond this whole solar system for a lesson of humility to ourselves, and of higher conceptions to our Creator.

Enormous as is our sun and our great brotherhood of worlds, our whole system is but one among millions upon millions of self-luminous suns, that do for thousands of millions of other planets exactly what our sun is doing for us. We have reason to believe that Sirius is sixty times larger than our sun. Many solar systems have two mutually revolving suns.

We speak of what we see; but, beyond our vision, what further immensity! It is impossible to con-

ceive an ending of its extent, — a place that is empty void.

The distances from sun to sun are so vast, that we can only conceive of them by referring to the length of time it takes the light to reach us. Light travels one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles in one second of time, or nearly seven hundred millions of miles in one hour, or more than sixteen thousand millions of miles in one day. Sirius, or the dog-star, is the nearest sun to ours. His light, traveling at that rate, does not reach us in less than three years and eighty days. That is, it is 20,000,000,000,000 of miles, or twenty million millions of miles between sun and sun; and there are millions of millions of suns. We can conceive of no end of space, and no space empty.

How does our narrow and special theology comport with the conceptions thus awakened of the Great Almighty, supreme over this immensity!

When we contemplate this vast expanse of suns and worlds, how is our conception of the great Creator magnified! how small is our whole solar system, especially this little speck of earth; and what is man that he is minded! Can we doubt that all this machinery of the universe is endowed with self-regulating power to preserve regularity and permanence? Not less requisite in the moral than in the physical government. The odd dogmas which theology invents for this planet are not reconcilable with any generalization which we can conceive applicable to the vast expanse of worlds we have been contemplating; nor can we imagine, that, instead of one divine law for all, there is a special and exceptional law for each.

The same necessity of motion by contending forces exists in all. The same changes and therefore physical evils, as we call them, exist in all ; and the physical law necessitates the same moral law in its essential principles. And the vast complication renders the self-adjustment of moral evil as necessary as of physical evil.

“ Mere matter ” seems to be a phrase disrespectful to Deity ; since all space is filled with material agents of God. It is through matter he is pleased to act ; and even in the vast spaces apparently void, matter, however ethereal, so fills and impacts every speck of room in creation, that, to find room for spirit, we are compelled to suspect more intimate relation with matter than is supposed. As the elements of matter are certainly indestructible and immortal, and as matter forms beyond all visible proportions so much the greater part of God’s creative exercise, there is certainly no irreverence to God, and no violence to human reason, to suppose that it is from matter which he so sanctifies, that it pleases him to create spirit, as it certainly pleases him to sustain it, and to make it the only means of demonstrating its power. What are riches and great conceptions without working hands ? Because the Devil is spirit, he has to get into some one’s body to effect any thing. He used a serpent’s body, a madman’s tongue, the lips of Judas, and the legs of swine.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is of far-off Egyptian conception, as their mummies show. Reason led them to see that spirit can effect nothing without a body to do its work. They made it a necessity of resurrection. It seems probable that they perceived the body daily and momentarily making our thoughts

from the material brain, and that when, by accident, disease, or death, the brain worked imperfectly, or ceased to convert its substance altogether, there was a stoppage of the production, partial or entire. And it is probable, that, as a generator of spirit, they considered the body should be invested with equal immortality.

MATTER AND SPIRIT.

“ ’Tis sweet to muse upon the skill displayed, —
 Infinite skill in all that God has made ;
 To trace in Nature’s most minute design
 The signature and stamp of power divine.”

No man can deal intelligently with the mystery of evil till he has traced the connection between matter and the intelligent spirit. We have said that spirit can make no demonstration without material organs. Neither can material life proceed without an intelligent spirit to guide its growth, its form, and its purpose. There is a mutual dependence, and an intimate relationship, if not elemental identity, that makes a line of separation impossible. And this is so clear, that it would seem that they can not live apart ; which would establish identity between moral and physical evil, and bring them under one law.

The brain of man consists of two separate but not detached brains, the front and the back. The front holds communion with the world without, and soars to heaven. The back brain knows nothing of the outer world. It has no metaphysics : it is all physical in its

functions, while the front brain is all moral and speculative. The back brain is the housekeeper. It cares for the body and its organs. It supplies intelligence through a thousand nervous monitors, by which are performed all the intricate processes of life, motion, sustenance, cleaning and repairing, and the like. It supplies the brain-material for the use of the moral department. It keeps it clean and in repair. For this latter purpose it requires a cessation of work in the moral laboratory, which we call sleep. The front brain caters for food and fuel, so to say. And the back brain attends the engine and the kitchen. The nose and tongue act as inspectors for the stomach or kitchen, as a check on the judgment and imposition of the provider.

The department of the interior is entirely beyond the control of the front brain. It would never know there were such organs as lungs, stomach, liver, bowels, kidneys, &c., were it not for anatomical inspection of other bodies. It is only when an organ is diseased that any feeling is communicated; and then the purpose is for warning of danger.

Thus it is manifest that there is an intelligent spirit inherent in matter, and distinct from the soul spirit. This latter sleeps; the former sleeps only in death. The natural spirit seldom errs; the moral spirit is mighty uncertain.

These two intelligent spirits come from the same source, and their differences are due solely to the differences in the brain-organs through which they work; as the heart and the pancreas derive their different structures from the same blood.

There is a system of rewards and punishments, by

which the tycoon of the department of the interior keeps in check the impositions of the mikado, or spiritual governor: dyspepsia, gout, headache, &c., on the one hand; joyous health and bright spirits on the other.

The back brain never makes a fool of itself: this can not be said of the other.

It is quite clear that there is such intermingling and mutual dependence, such twinship, that the two brains are essentially of one elemental order of intelligence. But one belongs to the soul; the other to the body. Each has intelligence; and the immortality of one as an intelligent principle necessitates the immortality of the other. The ancient Egyptians must have thought so when they established the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

All matter is endowed with self-working intelligence. The earth is a mass of intelligence, without which its complex movements would have no direction. Like the human body, it is forming and reforming, taking down and reconstructing. It has its venous circulation in its surface waters, and its arterial in its subterranean courses.

Its soil regulates with intelligence the growth of plants, and grasses are the hair thereof. Every plant has in itself a spirit of intelligence, that directs the processes of life. The nettle angers and stings like the wasp; the flower clothes itself in beauty, with taste more classic than our city belles. Like as we do marry and beget, so do the plants. Watch the manner of flowers in the pairing-season; and you will see that it is one thing in plants and animals.

It has pleased God to endow all vegetable and animal

life with intelligent spirit, to which consistency can not deny immortality. There is, therefore, in all we eat wherewith to sustain the mind as well as the body; and if it pleases God, so intimately and inseparably to mingle matter and spirit, moral evil would seem to be an equal necessity with physical evil, in the government of the Creator; and there is a like necessity of law, that moral evil, like physical evil, shall be corrected of its aberrations here, while the union is existing.

This study corroborates our instinctive faith, that there is a superior central source from which, like the rays of the sun, spiritual intelligence radiates, penetrating and directing every material thing in the universe, investing it with power of transmission and immortality, and far beyond popular ideas exalting the character and attributes of the Great Almighty.

HAVE TREES INTELLIGENCE?

. . . "Not a tree,
A plant, a blossom, but contains
A folio volume. We may read and read,
And read again, and still find something new, —
Something to please, something to instruct."

In the sacred philosophy of the seasons, a clergyman narrates as follows: "At a parsonage in Berkshire, England, there is a chestnut-tree of large dimensions. To make an embankment, the surface soil and roots were taken off, and the tree rapidly lost its vigor. A few leaves came in spring-time, but soon withered.

After a time, the tree took on new life, and at last recovered its full vigor, and bore its full annual crop of chestnuts. For a long time the cause of this change could not be traced ; but it was found at last, and thus it is described : —

At some distance below the bank, there runs a brook, over which a new and broad foot-bridge was placed. This was made of logs, which were covered with a deep coat of earth, and sodded as usual in that humid climate. The tree seemed to reason as thus : “ There is rich living on the other side of the brook ; see how the trees flourish ! If I could only get over there ! Behold, men cross : why can not I ? ” Faith inspired endeavor ; and the tree fabricated a special root, which it directed by the shortest line to the foot-bridge, worked its way through the soil of its covering, and reached the land of promise. Once tasting the fat of the land, it put forth a vast net-work of rootlets, and soon the dying chestnut-tree was born again to new life and rich inheritance. Call it by what name we please, here is intelligence, differing in nothing from our own guiding instincts. It is no humiliation to man, but it is exaltation to the plant kingdom, and to the wisdom, the power, and the glory of Him who is Father to tree as well as to the man, fashioning all things with one intelligent life to his equal purpose.

SPIRITUALISM.

“ There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.”

It will not do to cry nonsense, and pass as of no account a movement that has possessed the multitude, and is spreading with unexampled rapidity. It is true that it has taken on no proportions, no embodiment. Nothing has yet come out of it of a practical character. It gives no new moral light for our guidance.

It is said that its public lecturers give us aimless generalities ; that its tests and rappings serve no moral purpose ; that its clairvoyants astonish like fortune-tellers, but that is all. Yet we do not despair of seeing some practical purpose dawn upon us. It seems to be a chaotic power wildly struggling for concentration and usefulness. It may soon bring forth a master-spirit, that will reveal its real purpose to its millions of childlike admirers.

It may reveal a new religion to take the place of the present dying-out theology. We trust it may so far surpass all worldly religions, as to be self-convincing, without miracles such as all other religions seem to require to win belief in their perfection.

May it give us a better bond of union in intelligent faith and living devotion ! May it elevate women, and make marriage the rule, and not the exception !

The term of its infancy should come to an end. If it be destined to ripen into maturity, some religious

fruitage should begin to appear. Let its votaries awake from their dreamy faith, and pray for higher manifestation of the spirit, tending to more useful revelations.

GOOD AND EVIL COMPOUNDED.

There are singular compounds of good and evil in the same person, which indicate a puzzle in any final judgment of retribution. Dr. Rush has in his classification "the lying disease." It is not fraudulent and malicious lying he speaks of, though this may be also a disease under similar diagnosis. He speaks of that unmeaning, boasting habit of story-telling, of which examples are abundant. The patient seems to be incapable of speaking truth if the subject affords scope for lying. Many of these are newsmongers, whose only motive seems to be to please, and get credit for being first to know the news. They can not refrain from willful exaggeration. The tea-table brings out the symptoms. The patient is often amiable and charitable, and has no wicked habits, so to say.

Dr. Rush infers that the lying disease proceeds from organic malformation of the brain, because it is well known to physicians that certain diseases have the same effect on patients who in health are noted for veracity. *Quære.* — Could any one have a practice of lying if his mind were entirely sane?

Upham's Philosophy gives accounts of many persons celebrated for wealth, and otherwise of virtuous lives,

who could not overcome an unmeaning propensity to steal. Victor Amadeus I., King of Sardinia; Saurin, an exemplary pastor of Geneva; the wife of Glaubrus, a physician of wealth and position; and several titled ladies,—are given in illustration. Dr. Rush had a lady patient in Philadelphia, of great wealth and high position, and who had no extravagance to urge her, who yet found, as she assured him, the only pleasure of life in stealing. He tried every means such as are used in errant forms of insanity; but, while lamenting her habit, she confessed that Nature was too strong to be subdued.

A government official in Vienna is mentioned, whose stealing propensity was confined to cooking-utensils. He had, when discovered, two rooms full, and never used what he stole. These specialties are common, and must be referred to disease or malformation. Robespierre, the blood-thirsty miscreant, suffered from painful obstructions of the bowels. On dissection, “his bowels were found to be one adherent mass.” It is said, that, when a barrister, Robespierre refused a judgeship because he could not conscientiously pass sentence of death.

Marat, his bloody compeer, was a victim to some disease that made him spend much of his time in a warm bath, in which Charlotte Corday found him when she killed him. It is, says Dr. Rush, an interesting question, moral and physiological, how far these morbid ailments influenced the brain of these monsters, and led to their bloody career. Don Vincenti de Beutavel-y-Sazar lived in Ugigar, Grenada. His charity was so unbounded, that he gave to the poor till he was himself brought to destitution. He took to highway robbery

and murder, by which he obtained gold to give to the poor. In his confession, he says his first murder occurred thus: Two young persons were about to marry, when the parents broke off the match because the stipulated dowry could not be raised. Vincenti's heart bled for them. He knew a priest who was going out of town with fifty ounces of gold. He followed him, and asked the loan of it. Knowing him well, he cheerfully offered the loan; but, on learning the intended use of it, he refused. Vincenti shot him dead, and took the money. His high character sheltered him long from suspicion; and he committed many murders before final detection. When condemned to death, he expressed but one concern, — "O God! who will now take care of my poor?"

This is an extreme case; but it is a type of a large class of monomaniac passions that govern the soul with power beyond control. It shows that charity, the highest of all virtues, may become morbid and vicious by excessive indulgence; as though, in certain parts of their extreme circuits, they had a near assimilation in their component elements. If a good end justifies unlawful means, Vincenti may be justified at the final judgment of souls; otherwise, like Solomon's adjudication to cut the disputed child in twain, Vincenti's soul would have to be divided. One half would bear the heinous sins that can not enter heaven, and the other half would bear the Godlike virtues which can not go to hell. If ever there was such a thing as a twin soul capable of such a division, this is an instance. Otherwise it presents a difficulty apparently insurmountable in practically administering the theoretic law of separating good from evil at the judgment.

SUPERSTITION.

“He mistakes who tries
To search all mysteries ;
Who leaves no cup undrained, or path untouched.
Who seeks to know too much
Brushes with ruthless touch
The bloom of fancy from the brier of fact.

Keep some fair myths aloof
From hard and actual proof,
And let dear Fancy roam there as she will.
Whatever page we turn,
However much we learn,
Let there be something left to dream of still.”

EMERSON.

Superstition is belief not founded on reason. Religion is our moral atmosphere. Like the physical atmosphere, it is composed of two elements ; the lesser being the life-giving, and the larger its diffusing element. The truths which form the life-giving, moral element of all religions require the superstitious element to give them practical diffusion. Religion so compounded is a great social bond among men. Without superstition, it would be simply moral philosophy, bricks without mortar.

Let no man rail at superstition as airy nothing. There are mysteries in life which are beyond comprehension ; and it is well for us if we can quiet our minds by some satisfying theory that will withdraw embarrassing questions from fruitless strains of human thought. The dogmas of religion are the superstition thereof. By quarreling over them, and giving them variation from

time to time, we keep religion alive. And it is not impossible, that, in current superstitions, there are germs of truth which make the nearest approach we are capable of understanding, to truths that are inexplicable, because beyond the limited powers of our minds to comprehend; such as the nature of Deity, the beginning and the end of space and eternity, what is man made for, whither he goes, and what is his place and order hereafter.

When children ask how they came to us, we say we found them in the bushes. This has a good effect, because it stops inconvenient inquiry, satisfies the child's mind, and leaves it free for more profitable uses. If the mind in childhood is thus incapable, is there any difficulty in conceiving, that, in the trifling after-expansion of the same reasoning organ, there is not capacity to comprehend the immeasurably greater mysteries of the Infinite?

From the very nature and purpose of superstition, if it is to serve its design, it must be capable of such changes as satisfy the increased enlightenment of the age. As the child expands into manhood, the same superstition no longer satisfies.

Hitherto, women have been easily satisfied with every superstition, because their education was less general and profound; and men have been led by deference to pretend belief. But now it is the principle of the public-school system to give equal education to both sexes. Women are taught to pry into all pretensions; and we must look out when they begin to investigate. Their quicker wit, and their clearer brain, unclouded by stupefying tobacco, by strong drink, and other vices, will

no longer be satisfied with metaphysics that sufficed for women before their eyes were opened so widely.

Here lies the danger of the Church, in holding on to superstitions that will be no longer tenable, and in neglecting to inaugurate such gradations of change as may save it from the fatal consequences of general unbelief. The pulpit freely confesses its knowledge of the increasing growth of infidelity. What our metaphysics are is not consequential, provided they obtain faith. Whatever superstitions may best dramatize the fundamental truths of religion, and sustain interest in them, should harmonize with popular sentiment. And, to secure the widest belief, the surest way is to impose as little as possible on credulity.

A SURE REMEDY FOR IRRELIGION.

When it is said, that, were it not for religion, men would be still worse than they are, a truth is uttered to which there can be no dissent. There is another truth which should always accompany it: were religion better administered, men would be much better than they are.

What we respectfully and reverentially present to the consideration of religious instructors is this, viz., Is our religion so administered as to do any thing like the good it might do by improved methods? Let us see.

The Mohammedan, the Hindoo, and the Persian religions, as administered, do contrive to beat us in sup-

pressing eating and drinking to intemperance, in which ours is sadly defective. The worshipers of the prophet, of Buddha, of Confucius, of Zoroaster, are more prayerful and more devotional, day by day, than Christians. They live out their religion better than we. Profanity is almost unknown. In filial reverence, and kind treatment of animals, they surpass us. What shall we say of common honesty in the walks of trade? of resignation to suffering and ill-fortune? of money-worship? of picking pockets and pilfering?

Hon. Anson Burlingame, who well knows the people of China, says in his address to the American Congress, "If you examine the structure of Chinese civilization, you will better appreciate their manners, their industry, their patience, habits of scholarship, and competitive examinations. Our assumption of superiority over the Chinese in moral elevation has no justification." He intimates, that, to win them to Christianity, we must prepare to present its claims to the highest critical investigation of competent scholarship.

A reverend gentleman was shocked, on landing at Constantinople, by a remark he least expected. It was towards evening, and men had quit work. His baggage was strewed on the wharf. He was told to go to his hotel, and his baggage would be taken in the morning. He expressed such fear, that the Turk assured him there would be no rain. "It is thieves I fear," said the clergyman. "Oh!" said the astonished Mussulman, "you need not fear: there are no Christians in this quarter."

How do these heathen religions gain such a marked success in these important specialties? That is a question we may study to our profit.

Torpor in temperament, and climatic lassitude, may partly but not wholly explain the difference. If restlessness and discontent have come to us from our habits, and if the many evils we speak of owe their excess to whatever extenuating causes, it only proves that we need more powerful religious effort than is prevalent. We want new direction to our preaching. Shall we confess that our religion is incompetent to do what Mohammed, Confucius, and Buddha do in repression of our great evils of intemperance in meat, in drink, in money-absorption, in irreligion, and other consuming sins? Or shall we rather confess it is not the religion of Christ that is in fault, but the dogmatic perversions that weaken it by unbelief, and waste the talent of our clergy in studying to defend what no longer interests us?

The great majority of our preachers are drones in the Christian hive, who complain of empty pews and absentees, as if their own want of attraction were not in fault.

The remedy for all this is found at once when a popular preacher fills the pulpit. The trouble is, then, to find room for the crowd. Is it not so? "Popular" simply means, "competent;" for, if a preacher fail to interest, he is not competent to draw men to Christianity. In this age, it is vain to hope to revive our religion, unless we change the system of begetting apostles by theological machinery, to getting such as are called of God by extempore eloquence, or, so to say, by divine inspiration. Let it not be said that the congregation only can effect this reform. If we love Christianity, let us all unite, and make timely efforts for our common safety.

THE DANGER OF BELIEVING TOO MUCH.

We hear often of the perils of not believing enough ; but the great danger comes of believing too much. Jesus was a plain-spoken man. He had no theologic subtlety. What he plainly taught is enough, what he did not plainly teach is too much. It chokes the avenues of faith. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," means, also, "permit no Pharisaic additions to divide your reverence."

The dogmas which so greatly occupy attention and foster persecution and infidelity are exactly such additions. They are distractions from devotion to the plain teachings of Christ, and therefore there is danger of believing them overmuch.

We may waste precious time in preparing for a heaven that theology paints after the fashion of earth, to find, too late, that we have taken there treasure valued on earth, but not in heaven.

A speculator living in Minnesota, where every pig-pen requires a lightning-rod to protect it from the terrible lightning of that climate, bought, at high figures, the patent right of a superior lightning-rod for California. He made up a large stock ; and with flaming handbills of houses and barns on fire, and with high praises of his conductor as a blessing to California, he arrived at San Francisco, and heralded his advent by costly publication in every form. His fortune was as sure as if it was in hand. People did not call. It was their stupidity.

He observed people before his posters, laughing irreverently. God would punish them. Wait till it thunders! By and by he found that thunder and lightning are not among the institutions of the self-purifying atmosphere of California, that barns are seldom used, and that lightning-rods are unknown and unwanted.

So men who spend their lives in preparing for the next world, calculating that what serves here must be useful everywhere, will be likely to find their stores of preparation have gone to a realm where they are not appreciated.

We may find our wrangling creeds, our dogmas, and our many prayers, and the whole bundle of our theologies, rejected by the janitors of heaven, as entitling us to no passport of admission.

What if the Son of man shall ask you to show him three personal Gods, either in heaven, or in the gospel of his word? What if, confronted with the host of poor toilers, Jesus shall require you to point out any commandment for burdening his new religion with the old Jewish sabbath, and for robbing your brother of the innocent recreation he so much needs to soften the hardness of his lot?

What if he should ask you to show any thing in the Gospels, pretending they are inspired words of God, to justify your persecution of your brother who can not find it there? How many Christians are prepared to answer straightforward these and similar questions upon which may hinge their condemnation?

Ye who consider eternal pleasure as the reward of trifling merit consider that

“If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work.”

Consider how, in this life, happiness depends on useful occupation, and that this wholesome law may require that there, as here, every man's lot is to work on for ever in the service of the Almighty. If it may be doubted that intolerant dogmas will avail in heaven, let us judge no man for unbelief in them, but give ourselves more to charity, tolerance, and forgiveness, which will certainly avail us at the throne of grace. We can not know the fashion of life hereafter.

“ Search not to find what lies too deeply hid,
Nor to know things where knowledge is forbid.”

But

“ Seek virtue, and, of that possessed,
To Providence resign the rest.”

ARE THE MIRACLES RECORDED SUPERIOR TO NATURAL MEANS FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL?

No clearer enunciation is recorded from the lips of our Saviour than that he would do no miracles. The miraculous bread they asked him to give as Moses did, he refused, with explanations putting at rest all such demands; viz., that Moses did no such miracle, and, for himself, it was spiritual bread only he had to give; and that the only miraculous sign he would give to this generation would be the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matthew, Luke, and John).

Against these clear words we should have equally clear renunciation to warrant us to believe what is con-

tradictory of them. To make it consistent, either the miracles must be classed as traditionary amplifications, or the words attributed must be discredited. We prefer the former. The alleged miracles are what others report; while their contradiction is what our Saviour himself pronounced against them as not belonging to his mission. If people of this age no longer believe the miracles, they will believe more in our Saviour and his religion if we can relieve them of what is fatal to belief altogether. We have, as above, strong grounds from Scripture to sustain popular unbelief in miracles.

If it be admitted that our religion required miraculous aid, like all religions that preceded it, in order to satisfy the world that ours was better, our miracles should be superior to theirs. If our religion be divine, and theirs human, and miracles be the test, our miracles should be of the kind to comport with the great superiority of divine over human origin. It will not do to say ours were genuine, theirs fictitious. Each found belief; and belief is the test of efficiency. In any case, it is possible that ignorance may have been satisfied with what only seemed miraculous: and it is dangerous to charge all other religious histories with fabrication; for they can return the reproach in testimony of the disputable value of that sort of proof generally. How much higher claim would be innate proof of superiority needing no miracles!

We are left to wonder why, if, spreading quickly and convincingly, the proof by miracles were the design, the head men, the devout and learned, were not invited to a public proof with miracles that would have at once converted all Judæa. For instance, if our moon had

been converted into a ring like Saturn's, which could only have been the Creator's work, every man would have at once been convinced by such a miracle; and it would have had the elements of endurance instead of evanescence, as ought to have been expected, to clearly distinguish it from terrestrial doings, that, as our Saviour warns us, can be simulated. This would have been to every man, in all time, a personal miracle, instead of requiring a miracle of faith in the judgment of far-off people, unknown to us by name or by character for being above self-deception. Such a miracle may be said to be too much at variance with natural laws; but this is equally against all miracles. A new star moving out of order was the first guide given to the infant's place of birth, as if inaugurating a style of miracle which should be far above the kind claimed by other multitudinous religions. It was a beginning so obviously calculated to effect the object, that it is not unreasonable to ask why the common style of narrow, terrestrial, religious miracles was fallen back upon.

Suppose this be unreasonably hard; if our Saviour had given the art of printing as a divine gift, how would it have spread the gospel! How infinitely more powerful would have been a penny newspaper for every purpose of spreading the glad tidings! It would have passed as the greatest miracle. Every one from the highest to the lowest, in that age, would have accepted it as a miraculous revelation from heaven. From the very restricted effects of the miracles recorded, compared with such aid as a penny newspaper devoted to the new doctrine would have given to belief and spread of the gospel, it is fair to say that natural means would

have been infinitely more competent than such miracles as those that are claimed. And, where natural means would be so much preferable, it is doing great violence to faith, and injustice to God and the character of Jesus, to believe he would have taken the worst means to the waste and discredit of miraculous intervention, instead of the better means offered by God's existing laws; especially when the miraculous, by taking the place of the natural, retarded, instead of advancing, the rapid progress of his religion. It seems to be irreconcilable with all rationality. Had he even given a brush of miracle to brighten up the wits of the inefficient disciples, of whose dull apprehension he was ever complaining, it would have done more for his cause than all the alleged miracles. The selection of disciples is a very curious illustration, if the narrative be correct, that miraculous power of judgment was not displayed. He may have saved sinners; but Paul is entitled to the credit of having saved his religion from the oblivion which seemed likely to result from the incompetency of his ignorant disciples. To amend the inefficiency of his first selection, and as confession of it, a new miracle is claimed, that placed Paul at the head of our religion, instead of Peter; and it is in proof that Paul is our chief reliance to this day. It is clear that natural talents far above the disciples did the work, and the Paul miracle was supernumerary.

Finally, to further corroborate our views, Jesus has left us his clearest denunciation against miracles in general. By whomsoever claimed, and however convincing they may be to our senses, he warns us against placing any reliance upon them, because they are the easily-performed tricks of impostors, by which even

God's own elect may be deceived (Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22).

Acts viii. 9, 10, tells us that the miracles of a heathen magician, Simon of Samaria, were so convincing that he drew crowds of men, great and small. And they all exclaimed, "This man is the great power of God!" a higher attestation than was accorded to the miracles of Christ or his apostles.

These evidences go to show that Jesus was not a man of miracles; that he placed his religion above them; that, as the early Christian fathers inform us, the slow progress of Christianity was attributed to the want of miracles; and that, on this account, it was deemed justifiable to invent whatever might tend to advance the good cause and promote conversions.

By whatever rule of evidence we may be guided, it can not be held that the testimony of the miracles is so conclusive as to be absolutely of indispensable belief. And no good Christian can be excused before his own conscience for intolerance of his brother who subscribes to the great truths of Christianity, letting no man judge him regarding miracles and other evidences which perplex his reason, without heightening his admiration, or increasing his faith in Christ and his doctrines.

PRESENT INDUCEMENTS TO VIRTUE.

It is worthy of note that our doctrine of far-off punishment, intended to suppress crime, is precisely what it does not do. Of all people, our criminal population are least affected by it. Fear of hereafter is the last thought that ever occurs to such people. The doctrine

is held, as well as many others, even among better people, as something to say "we believe." But it is doubtful if any one inclined to cheat or to slander his neighbor is ever checked in one instance out of a score by any such terror. What restrains men from evil is fear of discovery and retribution here. Even then, give them four months' stay of execution, and the hope of evasion overcomes the fear.

We believe enough in spontaneous goodness to hope that a very small part of the higher quality of charity and virtue is due to hope of hereafter reward, or of any material reward outside of innate pleasure.

He who is good from love of goodness is far better rewarded, though he is not asking it. The man who refrains from evil only through fear of punishment is a worse man at heart than he who has courage to do, and brave the danger. Look never to the former for generosity, but from the latter. "There is honor among thieves," and much liberality.

It would be a higher order of teaching to persuade men to believe what is true as gospel; viz., that to be good and honest pays better than vice and dishonesty and intemperance. If the same eloquence and organized effort we use to preach doctrine to small purpose were directed to devising plans for the betterment of men in this way, we believe it would be a great aid to Christianity at home, and, by example, to its acceptance abroad.

In Paris, this plan has been tried with success so perfect as to prove its availability on an extended if not a general scale. We present it for Christian consideration.

Of all sins, petty dishonesty in trade, and, probably, more particularly among poorly-paid workers, will be

conceded as the most difficult of repression. The French have converted their cab and omnibus men by the following plan : —

These people are formed into a legion of honor. Every year there is a public judgment, at which the records are read announcing what each man has deposited at the Bureau of Articles found in their Coaches, of gold pieces received in the night for silver, and so forth. The increasing value of such returns shows, year by year, the continued success of the device. The variety of articles passes conception, and so does the value. What has been restored to owners is stated, and what has not been reclaimed. At stated periods, the unclaimed are sold. This makes a very large fund for distribution in the order of merit among the employés. The standing is determined by the number and value of articles returned by each ; and every man gets a certificate and a token. When a gentleman wants a coachman, this certificate, if of high order, at once insures him the place. In all affairs, it serves him whenever presented. It is his pride and his glory. The emulation to win a high record is a wonderful incentive ; and soon honesty becomes a confirmed habit. Fear, that is so debasing, is removed ; and in its stead there is planted a conviction that honesty is the best policy.

It is conceded by our doctrine that men must be paid for being virtuous, and punished for being vicious. But should we not effect more by offering men as great a proportion as possible of temporal equivalents which they can see and realize soon ? Our Saviour sets us the example. Peter, on behalf of the disciples, speaking of the sacrifices they were making in following him, plainly asks what profit they were to make by following

him, — “What shall we have therefor?” (Matt. xix. 27; Mark and Luke also.) He promises them a hundred-fold (as Mark says) or manifold (as Luke has it) returns in this world as the leading inducement, besides immortal life hereafter. It was by the hope of temporal profit alone he held them, as the sequel of their desertion proved when the temporal promises were not forthcoming. What they were plainly promised was, that Jesus, according to prophecy, would succeed in freeing the Jews from Roman subjection, and then, being himself monarch of the new kingdom, he promised to give them the office of judges. The Gospels show that he meant this literally, and wished them so to understand it; that he failed in the honest endeavor to fulfill the promise; and that, when arrested, they lost faith, saw no prospect of profit in further adherence, and therefore they deserted him, and made no effort to save him from the fate that befell him.

From this we deduce the lesson that we should follow his example in winning men to virtue and resignation under privations, by showing that they will get most amply rewarded here besides what may come hereafter.

After many abortive efforts to frighten intemperance away by after-life damnation, the other plan was tried, and it was the only one that had any success; viz., by convincing the inebriate that temperance pays better than intemperance. Why will not this plan apply to other aberrations? All vice comes from a morbid conception that it gives the most happiness; and as this is a mistake capable of demonstration by parable, that most beautiful of all methods employed by our Saviour, it seems to hold out great hopes of being successful.

Dr. Combe, one of our soundest moralists, and a devout philosopher says, "The idea of future retribution comes from imagining that vice and virtue do not seem, on superficial view, to be fairly retributed here. Hence, to justify God, it is thought necessary to suppose there must be some way that God will make it right hereafter." But, says Dr. Combe, "if, from all we can perceive here of God's ways, he is not just, how can we know he ever will be? How can we assume that his government is to go upon principles entirely different at one time and place from other times and places?" [Since God's law of six thousand years' observation must be invariable and permanent, and time is with him one eternity.]

Dr. Chalmers, whose opinion we all regard, disapproves this "fetching from afar proofs of God's righteousness." He says he agrees with that school of moralists, which teaches that there is a native and essential happiness in moral worth, and a like native and essential wretchedness in moral depravity; insomuch that one may be regarded as its own reward, and the other as its own punishment.

These embarrassments to devout reasoners will be removed if we succeed in our efforts to show that God is just here and everywhere, now and always; that by search we may find improved means to promote good, and to repress evil; that each brings its own balance here; and that, the more immediate the connection between the deed and its reward, the more effective is the preservation of the happiest equilibrium between the contending forces of good and evil, to which all moral life owes its activity.

OBSTACLES TO CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA.

From a book on the Chinese, published in New York, in 1867, by Rev. Justus Doolittle, who spent half his life in missionary labors in China, we gather some useful suggestions on the obstacles to conversions, which apply to India, and other religious nations which we call heathen : —

1st, It is impossible to get them to believe the Mosaic story of the origin of evil, and our dogma of the innate depravity of man.

2d, The Mosaic cosmogony. They believe the elements of matter eternal. To make something out of nothing is incredible ; or that all space was ever an empty void. They believe in the innate purity of the soul as it comes from the Creator, and as its infancy proves. Evil is a stain that comes from worldly contact, and it can not inherit immortality. It must pass away.

3d, The Godhead of Jesus he does not allude to ; but the Holy Ghost can not be made intelligible to them.

4th, The Christian doctrine of atonement, by which one innocent man's life is accepted for compensation for the wicked acts of millions of bad men, can never be fixed in their belief by any efforts of logic.

5th, The resurrection of the present body is ridiculed, and opposed by criticism hard to refute. They desire better bodies ; and they insist on the absurdity of our organs being adapted to life in the spirit-land, especially the repulsive excretories and others less mentionable.

6th, Our eternal hell, where transitory evils are transferred to a spécial part of God's domain, to be invested with immortal existence, offends their reverence for the Creator; still more so the unspeakable injustice of punishment so out of all proportion to the petty vices of human life. It is not possible to get this believed in China; and they hold our whole religion sacrilegious on its account.

They believe that virtue and vice are in great part retributed here.

They have a doctrine that works practical effect, which is not without example among us. It is called the doctrine of "meritorious deeds" as atonement for evil deeds. Every one seems to be doing something, such as mending defective highways, making public wells, lighting dark places, supplying free tea to travelers, and free coffins to deceased poor, and a hundred similar acts. By this means, most of their sins are wiped away. Of the balance remaining, some go to their children to be requited, as is proved in life. Comparatively few sins are left: these are of a heinous character, requiring to be purged away by treatment elsewhere.

Hell. — They wisely establish ten hells, on account of the various degrees of vice. Hence punishment is mercifully dealt in kind and duration, necessary to washing out the sinful soil, and making the soul clean as it was. Some sins require the soul to be sent back at once into life as men or animals. Some authors say a bad husband becomes a woman, and gets a bad husband to torment the soul till its sin is compensated. Mr. Doolittle thinks these punishments trivial and nonsensical, as well as wanting in frightfulness.

Heaven. — Souls made clean in hell are sent to

heaven for new usefulness. Their new life is a renewal of trials, and chances for promotion in various forms. But, at some far distant period, the circuit of life brings them back to earth. And thus the soul, by constant renovation of form and useful activity, recovers the necessary waste of wear, and insures its immortality. We can not join the author in pronouncing these doctrines absurd superstitions. Belief in them is universal; while ours lose their efficiency by a general want of hearty belief.

The reverend author says Confucius has been, for long centuries before Jesus, the sole moral light of this four hundred millions of God's children. Mencius and Buddha have contributed much; but Confucius is the great master spirit, and the light of his moral guidance knows no diminution of its luster to this day. His doctrines are beyond the reach of infidelity among the people they were for. Every man is a hearty believer. What a lesson for us!

He says that our dogmas seem to this four hundred millions of Confucian souls so unreasonable, so against natural laws, so paradoxical, — and the Chinese mind is so educated to close reasoning, — that it will require the most acute and best-educated talents of Christendom to get them to accept the dogmas of Christianity in exchange for those of Confucius, Mencius, and Buddha. He says that no missionary is fit for the work who has not a knowledge of the religion they already have, and candor to confess its merits. It is offensive to them to claim as doctrines of Jesus what was taught by their own religion long before his time. What we have to do is to dwell upon what we have that is new, and to persuade them it is better, if we can.

Now, many of our dogmas, chiefly those of inference, which Jesus did not teach, nor hint at in plain words, must for ever bar the spread of the gospel to these people. And one that is explicitly pronounced in our versions will have to be expunged before our religion can possibly be received in China, where filial affection and reverence are the great predominating characteristics of all classes. It is the command, that, to be a Christian, we must abandon and disown father, mother, sister, and brother. As we ourselves practically annul this, and as no cunning evasion will suffice to explain it away, may we not find ways to remove the obstacle to conversion?

There are fifty thousand laboring-class and bachelor Chinamen in California, among whom there are no women, and no homes, to temper disposition, and wean from vicious tendencies. Remembering this, let us ponder over that first-class authority, "The Sacramento Union" of May 22, 1868, which says, —

"It is proved by State statistics of crime that these lowest class of the children of Confucius are more honest, and less violators of law, than the mass of our Christians." The editors give their own experience; viz., "That no fifty thousand average Christians can be picked promiscuously here who will equal these poorest and lowest classes of Chinese heathen, as we call them, in industry, frugality, law-respecting, docility, good-nature, and honesty."

Are such a people (four hundred millions) worth converting to Christianity? Did our Saviour include them in his order? Having interpreted certain doctrines to suit peculiar minds along its course westward, may we not essay to present the gospel in its own simple and plain words on its return back toward the

place whence it came in the beginning; especially when it may serve the double purpose of supplying ourselves as well as them with hearty faith and earnest acceptance?

Japan is heathen; but in Jeddo, with its millions of people, not a beggar is to be seen in the streets. Every man reads. Not a drunkard, not a ruffian, not even a boor, is to be met anywhere.

MORAL SEWAGE.

Every thing in Nature works upon a basis of law that is common to all organic life. The human body shows that evil is a necessary product of its living processes; and, to prove that it is of God's ordaining, he has, in the womb, prepared organs of excretion to carry off the evil to be generated. The nose, the liver, the kidneys, the rectum, and many other organs, the pores of the skin also, prove, that, when Providence creates, it makes its creations self-cleansing. The body proves, also, what would be the consequence of suppressing the generating evil. It would be death. For similar reasons, it would be moral stagnation and death were the current of moral evil suppressed; as in catarrh and eruptive diseases, what the doctor aims at is free and safe conduction, not suppression, of the morbid production, till the normal balance be restored.

Every thing, however pure, which God gives us for the sustenance of life, is composed of the good we want, and of the bad which we cast away. The very process which is necessary to extract the vital good turns into repulsive evil the remainder. Yet this remainder was

pure as the other, and a necessity to the first growth of the good. Nay, more; this rejected refuse has every element for the renewed growth of the plants it came from, and of the animals it fattened. It is virtue in disguise of vice, as all farmers know. Its offensiveness obliges us to get it out of the way; and the wise use of it as a promoter of new good gives us our reward. It is exactly the same with moral evils. All moral evil is moral sewage, and evil doers are the excretory ducts that poison the moral atmosphere. When it comes to be understood, that, like manure on the field, evil is full of fertilizing elements to the moral earth, we shall learn so to treat it, and shall find that "there's a soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distill it out."

If the instincts of man, guided by Providence, teach us that all waste, abominable as it may appear, is composed of estray elements of good, and is convertible into pure creation, can we imagine that this is not a law which governs throughout the realms of God?

Nothing is more Godlike than the cleansing of what is offensive, and its restoration to purity; that nothing remain waste, but that every thing be turned to everlasting production of good. Be sure the sewage of the soul is not cast away. But, however offensive the mass of sin, God knows how to convert it to new uses, and, knowing, practices it in this instance, as we find he does in every other department of his government, which proclaims it the common law of his creation.

If the sinful soul be put in eternal torment, it results in no good to any one; it cleanses nothing; it restores nothing to man nor to God; it is rendering something made by God for ever useless, accursed, and beyond the

power of restoration, even by God himself: whereas, if the doctrine be true that punishment is a cleanser, a purifier, and a restorer, nobody is injured, and every interest in creation, including the Creator's, is benefited. Every fragment is gathered, that nothing be lost. Every thing works to the promotion of forgiveness, reconciliation, purification, and restoration to usefulness. The prodigal son that was lost is restored, and "there is rejoicing in heaven more than over ninety and nine just men that need no repentance." We pray you to weigh these opposing theories, and say which is more Godlike, which most comports with the paternal relationship Christ taught, with the wisdom and the benevolence of the Most High.

"All is well that ends well."

RELIGION FOR CHILDREN.

"I have many things to say; but ye are not ready to receive them."

While there is a vital gain in presenting the Bible to children, there is also loss. Reading the Bible is neither intelligible nor agreeable to children. The distaste early planted is hard to eradicate; so that, through after-life, very few read the Bible to get intelligent conception of what they were in childhood but unintelligent believers. They remain through life mere blind believers, unable to give reasons for their own edification, or for confirming the faith of others. The fruit of this is indifference and infidelity, two growing evils.

Neither our Saviour nor his apostles left us the sanction of example for our system. It is from other religions we derive it. They evidently desired to pre-

sent our religion to mature reason only, believing it the only religion that would bear the test.

There are reasons for our departure from the Scriptural example. But as the Bible was not written in adaptation to the intellect of childhood, and as childhood is but a period of preparation for maturing intellect, it seems as if a preparatory compendium should be made adapted to the comprehension of the young mind, and especially designed to excite interest in the great truths by the Saviour's method of parable illustration. The Saviour withheld many things, so did Paul, even from mature intellects, till the first principles should be firmly ingrafted. This seems especially to apply to the young mind, and to the dogmas which can only be elaborated from Scripture by logical subtleties, for the reception of which childhood is not prepared. Sectarians will object, because one-sided doctrine might suffer; but honest Christianity would gain by leaving questions that now make dissension to the unprejudiced consideration of mature reason. There seems to be sacrilege in compelling the mind, before it has reason, to for ever abandon Jesus and his teachings by committing it to sectarian departures from the word as it came from the Saviour, and by fostering bigoted intolerance that shuts out charity, and begets evils innumerable. John S. C. Abbott has shown us how history may be made popular and comprehensible to youth by abbreviating in a way to retain all that is essential to give intelligent conceptions to the young mind, of the great principles, and to omit what would be barren of interest and intelligible instruction. One condensed history could be made from the four records, omitting what would be unintelligible to children, and perhaps otherwise objectionable at that

age. The good effects of this unification of gospel history would probably lead to similarly successful efforts for the benefit of Christian readers of all ages.

The fragmentary character of our Gospels ; their varying words given as quotations ; their unequal support of reported miracles and of important lessons, such as the Sermon on the Mount, which is ignored by three of the evangelists, — render it desirable that the whole be set in order, and simplified for readier reference and memory. The three synoptic Gospels at least are susceptible of unification. The Gospel of John has so little accord with the others, that either it would be prudent to dispense with it, or it might stand as apocryphal (at least as of less authority, being one against three) in the weight of testimony.

TO RECLAIM THE ERRING.

“Think gently of the erring !
Oh ! do not thou forget,
However darkly stained by sin,
He is thy brother yet,
Child of the selfsame God.

“Speak gently to the erring !
With holy words and tones of love
Thou yet mayst lead them back.
Deal gently with the erring one,
As God has dealt with thee.”

“The Gospel of Good and Evil” teaches us to be tolerant of error, to value more, and to practice, our Saviour’s clemency, “Neither do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more.”

We all come from God, who is the only center of

perfection. The varying characters of men come, of necessity, from graduated departures from that center. The farther the circle extends, the farther men are from the central perfection ; till the outer lines mark criminality as the greatest degree of divergence.

A thousand influences beset us from nationality and climate, from parentage and companionship, and from other sources innumerable. The weak yield to evil, which the strong can resist. Every one is governed mainly by what he conceives is his interest. No one is wise enough to judge always what is best for his interest. If every man's reason were perfect, there would be no crime, because sound reason knows crime is not the door to happiness. It follows that every aberration from rectitude marks the exact deflection from perfect sanity of mind. Judicial decisions are modified by consideration of exciting causes and defective rationality. History acquits judges and peoples of criminal injustice in burning witches and heretics, on the plea of delusion by perverted reason. The insanity that was invisible to one age becomes visible to the clearer judgment of another age.

There is reason to suspect, that, as we grow more enlightened, we shall trace all crime to unsoundness of mind ; the difference being, that, in some cases, it is visible, and, in other cases, invisible insanity. Surely he is wrong-headed who believes that happiness is the reward of crime ; certainly he is less sound than he who seeks happiness in virtue.

Then all wrong doing comes of wrong reasoning, or of unreasoning impulses. Society puts restraint upon criminals for self-preservation ; but, if we reason well, our prisons should be asylums for the cure and reforma-

tion of distempered minds. The treatment should be after the manner that temperance societies reform inebriates; viz., convincing them that honesty is the best policy, and inducing them to enter into association, if possible, for mutual aid and moral support.

“Men are but children of larger growth.” Never was a child reclaimed from vicious propensities by punishment. Wise parents aim at making deep roots for good principles by kindly appeal to the reason and to the affections of the young. They put the little fellow on his honor. If he break a mirror with his forbidden ball, he is quick to confess it; while the whipped child denies, or casts upon another,—any thing to escape punishment. It is only by being “born again,” as Scripture expresses it, that criminals can be reclaimed. We must win their confidence as we do with children; seek out their good points that are dormant, but never entirely wanting; and address ourselves parentally to their cultivation, uprooting the evil by stimulating the growth of the good. If Heaven rejoices ninety-fold over one repentant sinner, will it not greatly reward the instruments of his redemption?

“The soul is God’s sweet breath :
There’s purity e’en when it errs ;
As sunshine broken, or a rill,
Though turned astray, is sunshine still.”

CONCLUSION.

No revelation ever given to mankind can compare with God’s unmistakable command, that now reaches every soul of earth, and penetrates remotest heathen-

dom. Every nation receives it, and obeys with alacrity ; for laws that come truly from the Great Spirit carry their own enforcement. And this is the commandment : “ Go faster ! ”

Behold the accelerated speed of mechanic invention and human production ; the electric telegraph, the fast propulsion of steam and iron ways, bringing all nations into neighborhood !

All the world is educating itself to direct the quickened march of progress. The sun itself comes, a volunteer in our quickened movement in aid of the finer arts, which else would lag behind ; the earth responds by pouring out from its deepest caverns elements of new light and golden streams to drive the car of commerce, with rapid interchange, around the world ; barriers of exclusion crumble before this providential mandate ; and opposing nations are forced to take up the faster pace.

Turn the eye upon the kingdoms, and mark how old-time theories do surge to and fro, unsteady, and are getting to be respected of men no more. All the world is arming with new enginery of war, portending radical changes, quickened strife, and larger havoc of battle.

Read well the signs, and you will see, that, from all this quickened and complex collision, there must come a vast production of evil as a concurrent necessity.

While every thing is thus pressing forward, behold, religion lags, a stagnant pool, “ like the stillness of a torrent ere it dash below,” and is lost in the deep. Christianity lives for ever ; but the dogmas of ancient ecclesiastic councils slumber and die. Indifference, like a moral drought, saps their growth ; and unbelief uproots them. “ Watch and pray,” says the text ; “ Go to sleep,” says the sermon. The pulpit slumbers, and sin

gambols without. What a condition is this to be in when the moral world cries aloud for tenfold increase of religious activity !

But chief among the changes affecting religion, and portending demand for doctrine that will bear sharp investigation, is the instinct that pervades all civilized nations to educate the women equal to the men, to give them entrance to halls of science, and a voice in public affairs.

It seems to be the initial work that is to give the world a more intellectual race of men and women under the law of progressive development ; and it seems to indicate that women, who chiefly sustain religion, will desire a share in the formation of creeds.

When women bring to the investigation their sharper wits, and their deeper reverence for the Saviour's actual words and plainly-spoken doctrines, the attempted improvements of old-time pagan sympathizers will be summarily rejected ; and our religion, purged of its corruptions, will enter with new life into the current of human progress. The Church has yet the power to lead the needed reformation. If it fail to arrest the prevailing defection, the people, with instinctive yearning for religious doctrine, will gather around newly-inspired teachers, that Providence has, hitherto, ever raised up under such circumstances. If our suggestions can be bettered, may Heaven, through more gifted evangelists, point out the better way to win men from the all-pervading indifference and unbelief, to hearty faith, and religious competency for the great work that is required of Christianity in this age of enlightenment !





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